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# LETTERS

OF

WILLIAM THOMPSON,

Lately Deceased.

WITH A

SKETCH OF HIS LIFE.

~~~~~  
SECOND EDITION,

*With Additions and Corrections.*  
~~~~~

"Honourable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years."

"But wisdom is the grey hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age."

*Wisdom of Solomon, c. iv.*  
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# PREFACE

TO THE

## SECOND EDITION.

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*IN* introducing the former edition of this little work to the public, it was stated that the motive which had led to its publication, was a desire felt by the Editor and some other friends of him whose life and sentiments it records, that the letters, which appeared to them to possess considerable value, should be rendered more extensively useful by being published, with such a sketch of the writer's life as would connect, and in some measure illustrate them.

The very rapid sale which the *First Edition* experienced, and the general satisfaction which has been expressed concerning it, have caused this republication, in which some additional letters are introduced, and a few slight verbal alterations and grammatical corrections made. Two or three passages are omitted, in the belief that the writer himself, had he been living, would have desired their suppression.

*It is to be recollected that the following pages contain a delineation of the conduct and sentiments of a real character; not of an imaginary being, endowed with every perfection, and exempt from every failing; but of one, who, in his progress to a more pure and exalted state, had to pass through many of the trials incident to humanity, was wrought upon by the same feelings as others, and was frail like them; and that, therefore, should it appear that any of his early opinions, are at variance with those of his riper years, it is hoped that due allowance will be made for such immaturity of judgment.*

*The selection might readily have been extended; but as it is, I shall perhaps be thought to have been too much influenced by the partiality of friendship. I hope, however, that it will be productive of some benefit, and that the younger class of readers especially may derive instruction from the amiable pattern which it holds out for their imitation.*

*The profit arising from this edition will be appropriated, with that from the last, to the use of William Thompson's parents and their surviving family.*

**GEORGE CROSFIELD, Junr.**

LANCASTER, 25th of 9th month, 1818.



## LETTERS, &c.

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**I**T will readily be admitted, at least by the serious part of mankind, that there is no species of biography more truly interesting and instructive, than that which enables us to contemplate the lives of those humble and sincere Christians, who, having their hearts embued with the love and fear of their great Creator; and having dedicated themselves to His service, pursue the path of righteousness; and though frequently labouring under great conflicts of spirit, and surrounded by many outward trials and difficulties, yet hold fast their faith, keep in view the glorious termination of their course, persevere unto the end, and finally receive the crown.

Of this number, it is believed, was **WILLIAM THOMPSON**, late of Penketh, near Warrington, in Lancashire, schoolmaster. He was born at Macclesfield, on the 26th of the 1st Month, 1794. His parents, William and Alice Thompson, then resided in that town, where his father carried on

the business of a joiner: his mother was the daughter of James Hargreaves, an ingenious mechanic, who introduced several improvements in the machines used for spinning cotton.

From the humble station which his parents occupied in society, it is not to be expected that he should possess the advantages of early instruction enjoyed by those whose parents hold a superior rank. When about four years old, he was put under the care of a schoolmistress named Ford, in his native town, with whom he continued three years; his parents then removing to the neighbourhood of Barton-upon-Irwell, he attended the school of Thomas Royle at that place until he was ten years of age; when, his parents having again changed their residence to Lowton, in the parish of Winwick, he became the pupil of Robert Horrocks, master of the free-school at that place.

There are few whose infancy and childhood afford any thing remarkable to narrate; and that is the case in the present instance, the editor having nothing to communicate respecting those early periods of William Thompson's life, except that his progress in learning is said to have been equal, if not superior, to that of most his school-fellows, and that he early manifested a love of reading, combined with a retentive memory, which enabled him to communicate to others the substance of what he had read. He was also distinguished by a grave and solid deportment; and it was a frequent practice with him, when the Scriptures had been read, (as was often the custom in the school at Lowton,) to remain after the other boys were gone, and ask his master questions concerning the sacred writings, and converse with him upon the wisdom and goodness of the Almighty, as set forth in them: and in these con-

versations he evinced much solid thought, and a judgment beyond his years.

His regular attendance at school ceased before he had attained the age of thirteen years; for about that period his father became so infirm as to be quite incapable of supporting himself or his family, which being numerous, it was necessary that every member of it, who was of ability, should contribute towards the general support; accordingly, William was sent to labour as a spinner in a neighbouring cotton manufactory, where he remained several years. During that period his health suffered much from the confinement of the situation, and the foundation was probably laid of that disease which was apparently the chief cause of his early death. In this place, so little congenial to his feelings, he passed most of his time in silence and retirement. Ever solicitous of improvement, and of indulging the love of reading which he had now fully imbibed, and which remained unabated till near the end of his life, he frequently placed before him some book of useful knowledge or religious instruction, in such a position, that, whilst pursuing the labour which his bodily wants made needful, he might also improve his mind; always keeping aloof from the greater part of his fellow-labourers, and steadily refusing to join in their conversation, or participate in the nonsense and ribaldry, the folly and profanity, which there prevailed, and which, it is to be feared, prevail but too much in most large manufactories. This conduct gained him the esteem of a few, but by the majority he was treated with ridicule, and became the subject of much scorn and many an idle jest; and from his reserved and serious manners, was esteemed by most to be little better than an idiot.

But this only operated as a trial of his faith; he knew in whom he trusted, and was not ashamed to be accounted a fool for righteousness' sake.

From an early period of life he appears to have had very serious religious impressions, to have been in a great measure weaned from the common amusements and diversions of young persons, and to have sought the company and conversation of serious people. This led him to an acquaintance with several members of the Methodist connexion, and in the thirteenth year of his age he became a constant attender of their meetings. This he continued for some time, and it was probably during this period that he wrote the following sentences, which were found among his papers, without a date:—

“I believe that the people called Methodists are a peculiar people of God's own raising up in this age of prevailing infidelity; and I believe that the right hand of His power has been displayed in a very wonderful manner, in raising them up, and in bringing them forth to be a people; and I believe that John Wesley and some others were as evidently raised up to be instruments in promoting this great work, as Moses was raised up to bring forth the children of Israel; and I believe that the Lord has raised up and called forth, many hundreds of ministers amongst the Methodists, and has given them ability to preach the word of life to the comfort of their own souls, and to the conversion of many thousands of others; and I believe that the Lord did make use of these weak and feeble instruments, in mightily confounding the wise; and I believe that by their preaching, light and life and immortality, have been made known unto many

thousands: and I believe that the fervency of spirit which has characterised many of the Methodists, has diffused itself into thousands of other denominations, and has been largely communicated throughout many parts of the known world; and I believe that the doctrines of the Methodists are many of them scriptural and right; and I believe that the blessed doctrine of sanctification has never, in any age of the world, been more fully proved, nor more earnestly recommended, than since the year 1750; and I am truly thankful that ever the Lord raised up this people, and I do feel a near and dear union with some of them, yea, and with all the Lord's people every where, and under whatsoever name or appearance.

"And [yet] I believe that all the Methodists in the world, can never be of any service to me in pointing out the way of salvation, if I do faithfully adhere to Christ Jesus, whom I desire to have for my teacher, preacher, leader, and guide.

"W. T."

Some readers may imagine that for William Thompson to say, he believes the Methodists to be a "people of God's own raising up," &c. and yet in concluding he believes "that all the Methodists in the world can never be of any service to him in pointing out the way of salvation," &c. has some appearance of inconsistency, if not of presumption. There is, however, one supposition, upon the admission of which the whole may be reconciled,—a supposition which the editor thinks is justified by the subsequent letter, and the general tenor of W. T.'s writings and conduct afterwards. It is highly probable that after his attendance at the meetings of the Me-

thodists, he retired to commune with himself, and that his mind was then strongly impressed with a conviction of the all-sufficiency of that Saviour whom he desired to have for his "teacher, preacher, leader, and guide," as well as of the inefficacy of human wisdom and human teaching in guiding him into the way of salvation.

It will appear from the foregoing expressions, that his opinions respecting the Methodists were of a very exalted kind; yet, notwithstanding this, and although he continued to entertain a high opinion of many members of that society, and maintained an intimate friendship with some of them to the end of his life, he became dissatisfied and uneasy with attending their meetings. By renewed visitations of Divine regard, he was made more and more sensible of the necessity of a spiritual and inward mode of worship, and of regeneration of heart; in search of this, he was brought into a low and humble state; when (they are his own words) he "mingled tears with his drink, and looked for the salvation of the Lord more than for the morning light."

In this frame of mind he remained for some time, much retired within himself. He discontinued his attendance at the meetings of the Methodists, and on that occasion, addressed to the preacher of the place he had most frequently attended, the following letter, which cannot fail to be considered as a very extraordinary production, when it is recollected that it is from the pen of an almost uneducated youth, of little more than fourteen years of age.

*To J. A.*

*"August, 1808.*

*"I feel that I can no longer keep silence;*

I mean with regard to neglecting coming to your meetings of late, which you will think is very strange: but I have herein followed the dictates of conscience, which affords me some comfort. That great and merciful God, who made me see that I was rebelling against Him, has, in his good time, shewed me, by the manifestations of His holy spirit, the difference that there is in worshipping in our own will and time, and of waiting in humble silence upon that God who worketh by whom he pleaseth.

“ It has very often been brought home to my mind when I attended your meetings, that it was strange that both you and I, and I. G. and many others of your society, should like to read of that great and eminent servant of the Lord, George Fox; and yet it was not noticed (at least not mentioned) that there was so much difference between our way of public worship, and that which he and those holy men practised, who spake not in their own strength, will, and time, but as the Almighty gave them utterance; wherefore, not only from their testimony, but from the Holy Scriptures, I judge it not right that one only should stand up to preach, but that there should be free liberty for any one to open their minds freely, provided it proceed from a divine spring of life, to the edifying of one another; for the apostle Paul saith, *1 Corinthians*, 14 c. 31 v. “ For ye may all prophesy one by one.” Now I would ask, how can this manner or way of worship be carried on so well as in silent waiting upon God, that he may prepare our minds by His Holy Spirit, to do his will, whether to pray, reprove, exhort, &c? But you may perhaps say, that provided the heart be right, it matters not what is the form or way of worshipping.

“ We find in the Holy Scriptures, that we are to worship God in spirit and in truth ; but how can it be possible that we can at all times worship in the spirit, if we enter upon it at any fixed time without waiting for the drawings and movings of the blessed Spirit ? Therefore I believe it is not right for one man or more to be appointed to carry on a religious meeting, as what is this but placing a dependance upon one another, which ought alone to be upon God ? For God is all sufficient to supply our wants, but we must ask aright, lest we should receive not. Oh ! I feel that it is an awful thing to open our mouths in the presence of Almighty God, and that it must not be done at any time or place when we have a mind ; wherefore holy David saith, *Psalm 141*, v. 3, “ Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth ; keep the door of my lips.” As if he had said, Lord thou knowest that I am a poor, weak, and sinful creature, and know not what to ask, or what to say in thy presence ; but, O Lord, guard my lips, lest I should be too forward in my own will, to ask that which is not agreeable to thy Divine will. And again, *Psalm 143*, v. 10, “ Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God ! thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness.”

“ Many passages might be quoted from the Scriptures, all concurring in one testimony : but let us also look into our hearts, let us search narrowly by the light that God has given us ; for I believe it is His holy will that we should be led out of this will-worship aforementioned, if we will but stand still in our own minds, and hearken to that still and small voice which cannot be heard or perceived amidst a multitude of words or performances. Could it be possible that each man



could have such a measure of holiness in him, as would qualify him to approach his Maker at any time, there would perhaps be no need of these remarks ; but, alas ! the case is far otherwise ; at best we are but poor depending creatures, that stand in need of a continual supply of grace, of strength, yea, and of knowledge what to say, and this particularly in a public way.

“ I beseech you to consider the impressive manner in which these kind of worshippers are warned in *Isaiah, Chap. 50, v. 10 & 11*. “ Who is he among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light ? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.” But mark, “ Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks ; walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled. This shall ye have of mine hand ; ye shall lie down in sorrow.”

“ Penn, in his book entitled ‘ No Cross no Crown ’ speaking on this subject says : “ I will close this great Scripture doctrine of waiting, with that passage in John about the pool of Bethesda. ‘ There is at Jerusalem, by the sheep market, a pool, which is called, in the Hebrew tongue, Bethesda, having five porches ; in these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water ; whosoever then first, after the trouble of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.’ A most exact representation of what is intended by all that has been said upon the subject of waiting. For as there was then an outward and legal, so there is now a gospel and

spiritual Jerusalem, the church of God, consisting of the faithful. The pool in that old Jerusalem, in some sort represented that fountain which is now set open in this new Jerusalem. That pool was for those who were under infirmities of body; this fountain for all that are impotent in soul. There was an angel then that moved the water, to render it beneficial; it is God's angel now, the great angel of his presence, that bleaseth this fountain with success. They that then went in before, and did not watch the angel, and take advantage of his motion, found no benefit of their stepping in: those that now wait not the moving of God's angel, but by devotion of their own forming and timing, rush before God, as the horse into the battle, and hope for success, are sure to miscarry in their expectation. Therefore, as then they waited with all patience and intention [intenseness] upon the angel's motion, that wanted and desired to be cured, so do the true worshippers of God now, that need and pray for his presence, which is the life of their souls, as the sun is to the plants of the field. They have often tried the unprofitableness of their own work, and are now come to the Sabbath indeed. They dare not put up a device of their own, or offer an unsanctified request, much less obtrude bodily worship where the soul is really insensible or unprepared by the Lord. In the light of Jesus they ever wait to be prepared, retired, and recluse from all thoughts that cause the least distraction and discomposure in the mind, till they see the angel move, and till their beloved please to awake: nor dare they call him before his time. And they fear to make a devotion in his absence, for they know it is not only unprofitable, but reprobable."

“Oh! that we were all convinced of these great truths; we should save ourselves from a good deal of wandering, confusion of mind, unnecessary running, &c. Many a time when I have been at a meeting, through not striving to get into a settled state, that is, not having my thoughts clearly fixed upon the Lord Jesus Christ, through my runnings to and fro in too much devotion: Oh! what a wild sort of unsettled state my mind has been in. But I have reason to bless God that he has showed me good things, that he has let me see by the light of his countenance behind all vain and earthly shadows, and the traditions of this world, to things that are immortal, eternal, for ever. He has showed me the way; Oh! may I walk in that way: though it be a narrow path, and but little beaten by travellers, yet the end will be glorious. And I think that we should run faster, and not with so many slips by the way, if, after we had taken up the cross, we would constantly look forward to the crown. Many a time am I almost as it were ready to fall quite away; so prone is my nature to do ill, that though I have had repeatedly deep and close convincings, yet I feel it hard work to keep from being enchained by him who “goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.” May I give ear and heed unto this still and small voice and reprove of sin, unto this heavenly call unto righteousness, which I feel in my heart, and which speaks loud! And may the God of all things, in grace, strengthen, stablish, perfect me! Amen.

“W. T.”

Such was the conviction wrought upon his tender mind, that divine worship is a spiritual

act, and to be known and performed in silence. \* Devotion, considered in itself, is an intercourse between God and us, between the supreme, self-existent, inconceivable Spirit, which formed and preserves the universe, and that particular Spirit, with which for awful reasons, he has animated a portion of matter on earth, that we call man. It is a silent act, in which the soul divests itself of outward things, flies into heaven, and pours forth all its wants, wishes, hopes, fears, guilt, or pleasure, into the bosom of an Almighty Friend.”\*

“Many are the advantages which result from silent worship. It enables a number of Christians to meet together for the performance of this important duty, without depending on any man to assist them therein; a dependance, which deprives numbers of publicly discharging this duty, even once in the week. It also preserves from the dangerous situation of drawing nigh unto God with the mouth, and honouring him with the lips, whilst the heart is far from him; and it is peculiarly adapted to the performance of that worship in spirit and in truth, concerning which our blessed Redeemer has given this memorable testimony: ‘The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father, in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit; and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.’”†

About the time that he wrote the foregoing letter, his sister, who for the same reasons as

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\* See a quotation in Kersey’s Treatise on the Fundamental Doctrines of the Christian Religion.

† See Tuke’s Principles of Religion.

himself had also withdrawn from the meetings of the Methodists, went to the meeting of the society of Friends, at Warrington; and having expressed to her brother the satisfaction she had found in so doing, he was induced to accompany her the following week. In that small and quiet assembly, he found such peace and satisfaction, that he became from that time forward, first an occasional, and afterwards a regular attender of the meetings of Friends, and was ultimately admitted a member of their Society. It has been stated, that of the propriety of silent worship, one of its leading doctrines, he was already convinced; not by any outward ministration, but by the power of truth upon his mind.

His place of abode being nearly equidistant from the meetings of Ashton, West Houghton, and Warrington, he, at times, frequented them all, but chiefly the last mentioned place, and that being six miles from his residence, it was often under considerable outward difficulties that his attendance was accomplished; nor can it be supposed, that any thing but a sense of duty and an anxious desire for peace of mind, could stimulate him to it, fatigued as he must often have found himself with the confining labours of the preceding week.

He still continued to work in the cotton manufactory, attending school in the evenings, as opportunities occurred; and, at those times, he was frequently employed in writing letters to his acquaintances, on moral and religious subjects. In this exercise of his faculties and imagination, may be traced the commencement of those powers of epistolary composition, which in after life he displayed in no common degree. His taste for reading also continued; and as his

means of obtaining books were few, the indulgence of that taste compelled him to the perusal of almost every book he could procure. At the beginning of the year 1810, having met with a French grammar and dictionary, he commenced, without any other aid, the study of that language; and it appears by the last paragraph of the following letter, that at the end of eighteen months, he had made a satisfactory progress.

*To J. R.*

*"Lowton, Sept. 30, 1811.*

"I have ventured to express my earnest solicitude for thy health and happiness. For my own part, through the mercy of Providence, I continue in perfect enjoyment of the former. But for the latter, O my friend, what shall I say? I almost think sometimes that the more we seek this inestimable treasure, and the less we find of it: and why? it might be asked. I think the answer will be, because we do not seek aright—Shall we place the enjoyment of it in the things of time and sense? No; even the slightest deviation from moral rectitude, convinces us, in our serious moments, that an inordinate use of corporeal shadows, is productive of nothing in the end, but that inexpressible sorrow which no words can pourtray. Shall we place it in literary attainments? These, though in some sort necessary and agreeable, yet by no means afford that permanent, heart-felt happiness so generally sought for. No, the human soul is created with vast powers of perception—with infinite desires. The mind of the greatest philosopher, or most profound reasoner in the sciences, abstracted from these things, must remain as a vast abyss, as a

vacuum. What is it then remains? still the important question. I would answer in the words of a judicious author: "It is the highest, moral RECTITUDE OF CONDUCT—OR, in another and more comprehensive word, TRUE RELIGION." I might expatiate largely upon the benign influence of this glorious science over the human soul; but I would hope thou art not unacquainted with it, though perhaps, with myself, thou knowest only sufficient to see thyself in need of it. Excuse me, dear friend, this I can truly affirm to be the case with me. It is not the religion of knowledge that we want, for this will stand us in no stead at the day of account. Oh! no, it is the religion of obedience and of love. This alone can confer true and never ending happiness. May we begin to seek it while it is yet day, in the morning and prosperity of youth, is my earnest and fervent desire.

"I continue to pursue my studies with unremitting ardour, as far as my necessary employment admits. I have been at considerable pains within this year and half, to acquire a knowledge of the French language, and with the help of a very good pronouncing grammar, I think I have made some progress.

"W. T."

In a letter to the same person, dated Oct. 25, 1811, he says: "I have commenced learning Latin, which I believe will be much facilitated by what knowledge I have of French, through the similarity that exists between the languages."

Thus it is, that by a mind ardently engaged in the pursuit of knowledge, the most unfavourable circumstances are overcome; the greatest difficulties are surmounted; the strongest obstacles

are removed: for the subject of this memoir, though possessed of little leisure for reading, obliged to labour constantly for bread, placed in a situation peculiarly unfavourable to the expansion or cultivation of the mind, and surrounded by many depressing circumstances, still continued his studies and the acquisition of knowledge; and so improved his mind, as to become, in a short time, a well qualified instructor of others.

It was towards the close of the year 1811, that the writer of this sketch first became acquainted with WILLIAM THOMPSON. A letter from him written in French, requesting the loan of a few books in that language, led to a personal interview, wherein the editor was as much pleased with the native modesty of his demeanour, and his genuine humility, as he was surprised at the powers of his mind, and his talents for conversation. Subsequent intercourse confirmed the first impression, and led to a correspondence and a friendship which terminated only with William's life. To him this connexion was of importance; and it is hoped that it was mutually advantageous; for whilst he who now writes was made instrumental in promoting the comfort of his friend, and in enlarging the sphere of his acquaintance with men and books, he desires thankfully to acknowledge that he has often derived instruction from the letters of his correspondent, and has frequently been edified by his conversation.

The first, and almost immediate, result of the acquaintance thus commenced, was his introduction to a more extended circle of society: whilst the frequent personal interviews afforded by his attendance at Warrington meeting, produced a more intimate knowledge of his character and worth.



By means of a subscription, which a benevolent individual exerted himself in procuring, W. T. obtained a share in the Warrington library, containing about 1800 volumes of miscellaneous literature; this ensured him a plentiful supply of books, and proved a source of great gratification.

With a few of his newly acquired friends he commenced a correspondence; to some of them, part of the subsequent letters are addressed.

*To A. T.*

*"Lowton, July, 1812.*

"I cannot but request thy perusal of these two very interesting pieces,\* in which I consider there is a great similarity; the purport of both being an elucidation of some things which the greatest part of the community are as yet but little informed upon; I mean, the probability of an universal diffusion of Christian knowledge in the world, and particularly in that immensely wide field of action, where operations seem at present to be vigorously carrying on, and irresistibly forcing their way into nations, to the very name of which, the European Christian was, till now, a stranger. Already do we see in many of these unexplored regions, the superiority of Christianity manifest itself over the darkness of Paganism. Already is the standard of Divine Truth lifted up, by the translation and propagation of those sacred oracles, with which unthankful Europe has long been favoured, unconscious of her invaluable privilege. The time seems to be now arriving, when the oriental nations shall enjoy

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\* Some of Dr. Buchanan's writings.

the same privilege, the possession of the Scriptures in their respective languages and dialects: this it appears from the reports in hand, is considered by the simple enquiring Hindoo as a most inestimable treasure, and is sought after by many with the utmost eagerness and enthusiasm. Whilst, in the western world, the soldier is seeking the vain applause of military honour; while the statesman is aspiring after that popularity which may transmit his name to future generations; while science and the investigation of nature are carried to such a pitch as it was supposed the human intellect was never capable of arriving at; and the merchant is busy heaping up riches which he may perhaps never enjoy; the humble the indefatigable missionary is holding forth the glad tidings of the gospel of salvation, through faith in a crucified Saviour: and the records of Divine Truth are received with open arms and enraptured hearts by the people of these unrefined and half-civilized nations, after a lapse of eighteen centuries. And who can remain an unconcerned spectator of a sight so interesting, at a sight so full of matter for reflection as the christianizing of the Heathen world? For my own part, I feel myself warmly interested in the cause, though constrained to remain useless.

"I have tasted of the power of true religion; and this leads me to appreciate its intrinsic value so much, as earnestly to wish that others may enjoy it, whether Jew, Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, or poor despised African. All have alike need of a Saviour, and for Christ to become to them, all in all. How glorious a theme is the universality of Divine Grace, which visits all, without distinction as to their rank, situation, or condition in life! Oh! my heart is made thankful when I

take a retrospect of years that are past, and see the infinite condescension of God, who hath borne with me unto this hour. I can truly say, it is of his mercies that I am not consumed, and am penetrated with wonder, that in return for my disobedience, he should have enlightened my understanding, and disposed me to truth and rectitude of heart.

“Now, in order to obtain a right knowledge, in matters of so great importance, we must not content ourselves with a mere superficial investigation; many, alas! too many, are content to be carried down the stream of life, without the knowledge of any destined port; and my heart is often affected when I see the gay, the volatile, and the sprightly youth living wholly unconcerned at the events of futurity.

“Oh! that many might experimentally know a work of holiness wrought in the heart; this can alone enable us to endure with resignation, and meet with fortitude, the complicated variety of ills with which life abounds; and when that awful crisis approaches, the hour of death, how peculiarly grateful is the consolatory influence it affords!

“W. T.”

*To G. C.*

(TRANSLATION.)

“Lowton, 8th mo. 21, 1812.

“As thou hadst expressed a desire to meet me at Ashton meeting, it would have appeared more respectful if I had acceded to it; but thou knowest, my friend, what is, or at least what ought to be, our intention when we go to meet-

ings; it is not only to meet our terrestrial friends, we ought to go with our hearts solemnized with the humble hope of meeting with our Heavenly Father, who is our only, our true friend. This ought to be esteemed the first consideration. It is worth more than all other things, and therefore to it every thing else ought to be sacrificed: I felt on that day a strong desire to be at Warrington, a desire that I dared not to neglect. I accordingly went thither, and I have not found any reason to repent it; it was a precious time to my soul, and will not be forgotten.

“What I chiefly designed to express\* was, that we should love truth above all, and that the ornaments of language are of very minor importance. Almost every one will avow that this is true; but I am much afraid that our hearts are not sufficiently impressed with the full force of the sentiment: I often fear, that in seeking for the great and sublime, we follow after a deceitful shadow. We feel sometimes a species of enthusiasm animate our hearts, which is contrary to simplicity and truth. We read with pleasure the heroic adventures of the Heathens of antiquity, because they are mostly written in a lofty style; whilst the pure, true, striking, and majestic words of our Holy Redeemer are either entirely despised, or treated with the most perfect indifference. I have often wondered why it should be thus, and I have had lately some serious thoughts on the vanity of attending to the cadence of words, or the melodious harmony of sounds; it is an important subject, but I fear that it but rarely commands sufficient attention.

“W. T.”

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\* Alluding to a former letter.

*To M. C.*

*"Lowton, 9th mo. 1812.*

"If I have been led to admire virtue, it ought not to be attributed to any superior sagacity which I may possess; let the reason be assigned to its proper cause—her own superlative beauty; the lustre of which is so dazzling, that, did we not resolutely close our eyes, I believe we should be individually smitten with its excellency; if this were once the case, we should be willing to relinquish all trifling accomplishments, or at least to consider them as very inferior objects; and we should apply ourselves with unwearied assiduity, in search of the pearl of inestimable price, that treasure invaluable.

"Numerous and powerful are the attractions of creaturely enjoyments, which steal away our affections from their proper channel; even many times, when the judgment is better informed, and a desire is existing in the soul to resist every thing contrary to truth; but alas! these desires are often too faint and ineffectual to enable us to become victorious in so mighty a warfare. For mighty indeed it is, and if we would be accounted good soldiers; if we would faithfully discharge our part in the great conflict; if we would see the subjugation of our passions, and evil propensities, and an entire conformity to the Divine will, we shall have more than a neutral part to act: we shall not be included in the number of idle spectators.

"Impressed with the importance of this cause, ought we not to apply ourselves with unremitting fervour to the prosecution of so glorious a work, the salvation of our immortal souls? Oh! that

every one was made sensible of the value of their immortal souls: they would then fully comprehend the weight of that expostulation, 'For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' What are all the empty honours which this world confers to a soul thus impressed? It can feel no more satisfaction in these transitory enjoyments, because it looks forward into futurity, and clearly anticipates that awful period when every secret shall be made manifest, and all things appear in their true, genuine colours. And Oh! what encouragement offers to a character of this description; to a seeking, hungering soul! What a cloud of witnesses rise up in all ages which testify to the efficacy of this living virtue! How many of the righteous, whose race is run, can we contemplate, whose memories are 'as precious ointment,' and whose lights shine forth as the 'perfect day,' inspiring, in the soul, a sacred emulation to tread in their steps, and to follow them in the way which leads to permanent felicity! These bright evidences are united to that sweet consolation which renewedly flows from the immediate source and fountain of all good; producing that peace and serenity of mind, of which the world has no conception. Happy are they who are made acquainted with this blessed experience, who are willing to suffer an abnegation of all earthly good, if happily they might lay hold on those 'durable riches' which are eternal in the heavens. I remember an account of a French lady, (Guion) who was brought to see the vanity of all sublunary enjoyments, so that she mourned sorely, desiring after a knowledge of the truth above all things; and when, through infinite condescension she was enabled to find that which she had long

earnestly sought, she passionately exclaims: 'O beauty, ancient and new!—O treasure of treasures! why did I not seek thee sooner?' Such was her language, and such is the language of every soul that experiences the same work, that is earnestly engaged in the same cause. And why should we feel solicitude on any other account, seeing that the dissolution of all things is at hand? A few more measured periods of time will terminate for ever all our anxious cares, will quiet every heaving breast. Even that awful day is hastening, when the righteous shall receive their full reward, and injured truth publicly triumph over her enemies: O happy, happy day! Then shall the righteous shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Then shall prayer be swallowed up in endless praise, and desire be lost in the full fruition of enjoyment. May we then cheerfully make such sacrifices as are required in the way of our duty. May we patiently abide under such trying dispensations, as are intended to refine and make us meet for this blessed society. And may we eye, with the most perfect apathy and indifference, the fluttering scenes of dissipation, which move around us.

"If the most careful and deliberate enquiry be made into the subject, I believe this will invariably be the result; that in no situation, in this probationary state, can we rationally look for unmixed happiness. Such as possess the apparent advantages of riches and affluence, as are the farthest exempt from life's inconveniences, and have nothing to dread from the chilling hand of penury, too fully prove that no human bliss is without alloy. Every one must pass through difficulties in their journeying through this vale of tears. Though the measure which

each has allotted him may greatly differ, yet a certain portion seems inevitably to be our lot.

----- On the one hand, we see science daily making such new discoveries into the almost impenetrable secrets of nature, as to approach the confines of supernatural intelligence. We see the arts in such a highly improved state, that they may be almost supposed to have arrived at the ultimate pitch of perfection. And useful information seems to be diffused through all ranks, perhaps in a superior degree to what any former age or nation ever enjoyed. But on the other hand, let us examine, and we shall discover, that this amazing expansion of intellect contributes little or nothing to the advancement of the great cause of truth and righteousness. On the contrary, by infusing a spirit of self-importance, it often becomes subversive even of morality.

“But of all the complicated variety of evils under which Britain labours, there appears to be none of greater magnitude, than this long and sanguinary war. What tens of thousands of our fellow-mortals have been sacrificed at the shrine of ambition, within the last eighteen years! Oh! sensibility bleeds at the sad retrospect. How long will the hearts of our rulers remain unmoved at the cries of the widow and the orphan, who are destitute of comfort and support? and many who are not consigned to immediate death, are reduced to a state of misery by an almost entire deprivation of the common necessities of life.

“Seeing then; on every hand, our critical situation, (both inward and outward,) how indispensably requisite it becomes to seek for some resource which may give us a competent degree



of fortitude ; and such a resource can only be found in religion. This, when truly known, elevates the soul above all terrestrial disquiet ; it purifies and exalts the affections ; and it gives to its possessor, a resignedness of disposition which no words can describe. It may not deprive us of a due degree of concern for temporal things, but it will relieve us from all fruitless anxieties. If it does not exempt us from suffering, it will at least effectually alleviate our griefs. But these benefits, which accrue from religion, are incomparably exceeded by that invincible courage, that holy triumph, with which it inspires the soul in the hour of death. It is an undeniable proposition, that if ever consolation and support are requisite at any time, they are peculiarly so in that awful moment. Situated as the soul is, standing upon the brink of an unchangeable state, how exquisite must be its sensations ! But the Christian preserves his serenity of mind even here. He looks behind, and sees a vain world which is grasping at perishable riches : he looks forward, and sees an inheritance incorruptible is reserved for him.—A crown which shall never fade.—A mansion where sorrow and sighing will be for ever excluded.

“ I hope thou wilt be candid enough to consider these as the effusions of an honest heart ; as the effects of desire for the universal welfare of all mankind. I have seen the transcendent beauty of walking in the path of truth and rectitude, though I have daily to lament, my own weakness and unworthiness. For, as I have before observed, the things which have a tendency to turn our affections from their right course, are very numerous. How often are we ardently in pursuit of such things as the judgment clearly

discerns to be hurtful, or at least unprofitable! Every one does not inherit the same propensities, or seek pleasure in the same sensual gratifications. But however widely our pursuits may differ, if they tend to divert from the right object, they may be considered as equally obnoxious. An insatiable thirst after literary knowledge, I believe is not the least hinderance which prevents many from walking in that simplicity which truth requires. I have noticed a disposition of this sort to have a great ascendancy over the minds of some respectable friends; and from a conviction of its pernicious influence, when too much indulged, I have been deeply solicitous for their welfare.

“ Science, abstracted from religion, can never be productive of true peace and tranquillity of mind. We may become conversant with the languages, manners, &c. of both ancient and modern times; nay, if it were possible to become perfect masters of every department of science, and every branch of erudition, there would still be something materially wanting; there would still be a vacuum in the soul, which nothing less than immensity can fill. I often think it sheds additional lustre upon the brightness of the gospel dispensation, when we consider, that its first propagation was chiefly intrusted to a few poor illiterate characters, who possessed no outward abilities which might command popular notice. They did not go forth in the performance of their great charge, armed with all the soothing and persuasive arts of oratory: they were endued with that all-sufficient and irresistible power, which needed not the aid of outward accomplishments to render it effectual; the power and demonstration of the Spirit. What

matter of humiliation to the aspiring mind, which would ever be searching out and demonstrating the causes of the mysterious operations of nature, when we refer to those gracious words: 'I thank thee, O Father, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.' We ought not, however, to infer from this, that outward qualifications are to be despised or debased below their intrinsic value; only, we should be seriously impressed with this truth,—that knowledge can only be estimated in proportion as it is subservient to truth. But this is a far greater work than is generally believed. From what has been expressed, as well as from our own ideas, we may safely infer, that, whether, in circumstances of life, we are placed above or below mediocrity; whether we are eminently conspicuous for the profoundness of our intellectual attainments, or designed to move in a more ordinary sphere; in every situation and condition, we have reason to consider Virtue, our highest interest.

"W. T."

*To N. H.*

"October, 1812.

"There is perhaps no art which admits less of being taught by a set of formal rules than the art of polite letter-writing. The daily occurrences of life are so various and complicated in their natures, that it would be impossible to demonstrate, by example, the exact method to be pursued in epistolary correspondence. Any person of common understanding knows, that a letter of business, and one expressive of love and friendship; a letter of resentment, and one of

gratitude; a letter to an equal, and one to a superior, each requires its peculiar style of address and expression. And as we may have occasion, in passing through the various incidents of life, to correspond upon these and many other subjects of equal importance, I do not know of a more infallible director to assist in conducting ourselves with propriety in these matters, than good sense. I would not be understood to speak of the sense or reason which we possess in common; it is something of a more refined nature, in which is included a courteous and affable behaviour; a lively and solid wit; a promptness of sagacity and apprehension; in short, the ingenious letter-writer, and the man of good sense, are identified as one. Little more can be done, in giving this sort of instruction, than to point out the most usual and the most prominent errors. Our language is neither so deficient in words or expressions, as to necessitate us to make use of one form of address indiscriminately, and on all occasions. It is another most indefensible error, to use the vulgar idiomatical phrases of the language, when expressing matters of the very first importance. This clearly evinces the party concerned to be of mean education; a more extensive knowledge of the world mostly proves an effectual cure for this species of vulgarity; for we then find that the polished Englishman speaks or writes the same in all places, without being influenced by a provincial dialect.

“---- But I hasten to a more important consideration; I mean that sort of *hauteur* which some people have the vanity to display, by continually jumbling together a number of high sounding words, which though significative in themselves, yet, by the unskilful manner in which they are

used, serve for no purpose but clearly to evince the ignorance of the author. I would more particularly advise thee to guard against this species of error, as it, more than any other, lays us open to the just censure of mankind: we cannot expect, if we affect to express ourselves in a manner unbecoming our stations or abilities, but that the world will retort upon us with the keenest acrimony, and most pointed contempt. This rule will hold good throughout every transaction of life; we must entirely discard all self-applause before we can expect that deference from others which is due to our superior qualifications. Excuse me if I make a digression here, in rendering a small tribute of praise to that dignified ornament of human nature, Modesty. This amiable quality, so adorns its possessors, as to be sure of engaging every person in their favour. What can be more agreeable, what more fascinating, than to see a man eminently distinguished by the endowments of nature, or by the profoundness of his erudition, who yet appears, as it were, unconscious of his superiority; who is possessed of that humble diffidence, which, whilst it seems to hide his talents, only serves to render them more conspicuous to public view?

“Many are the illustrious precedents which we find in the annals of history, who were no less amiable for their modesty, than their other accomplishments; the delineation of whose characters ever excites a noble emulation in the generous soul. I might instance not a few of the characters of antiquity, who preferred indigence and obscurity, with virtue, to all the tinsel-pomp of an imaginary grandeur.

“But can the testimony of an individual, say

of multitudes, be held in equal reverence with that of the great Christian Lawgiver, the *pattern* and *essence* of every perfection; the purity of whose doctrine is unadulterated by the absurd traditions of heathen mythology. Unadorned by the flowers of rhetoric, divested of every pretension to what is falsely termed eloquence, his words carry with them an irresistible evidence of their truth, and still continue to speak 'as never man spake.' Was there ever, in any age or kingdom, such a standing memorial of humility, patience, and simplicity exhibited, as in the life and sufferings of Jesus? And yet, what age ever produced a personage (how extraordinary soever) who could lay the smallest claim to that inherent greatness which he possessed? He, before whom all the nations of the earth are but as 'dust in the balance,' or, 'as a drop in the bucket,' we see, performed the most menial offices of humility and love, and meekly submitted his person to every indignity which the proud, intolerant spirit of the Pharisees could suggest. Let me repeat one of the many perpetually binding commands which he has delivered for our instruction: 'Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant' It is our duty, as Christians, to attend, with reverential awe, to these divine injunctions, and to endeavour continually to impress upon our minds the necessity of being clothed with a modest diffidence in our whole deportment; and this ought to extend its influence over the minutest concerns of life. By invariably pursuing this conduct, we shall ensure the esteem of the good, and even command the respect of the wicked; if we have arrived at eminence in any valuable acquirements, our acquaintance will

be sought by such as are capable of appreciating their merits; and by thus patiently pursuing the path of industry and perseverance, we shall make slow, but sure advances to perfection and to fame.

“ - - - - Though I do not suppose the letters of either Addison, Steele, Swift, Locke, Chesterfield, Lady Mary Montague, or the vivacious Sevigné, to be the exact standard of epistolary style; I would not dare however, so far to assume the critic, as to decide upon the comparative merits of these celebrated authors. There is certainly something excellent and worthy of admiration to be found in all their works. I should not hesitate to give them my suffrage, were not my mind impressed with this truth—that a studied elegance of expression, and purity of sentiment, are seldom concomitants with each other. We should remember, when we feel ourselves sensibly delighted by the easy negligence, yet symmetrical harmony, which is to be found in some popular works, that, with a graceful elocution, and a splendid diction, a man may be possessed of the basest morals, and the most corrupted principles. I would prefer an honest, undisguised sincerity of mind, though incoherently expressed in monosyllables, to the most ostentatious pomp of words, when used to cover dissimulation, or when sophistically employed in the perversion of truth, and the propagation of falsehood. Under the influence of such principles as these, we shall be extremely careful of lavishing forth extravagant encomiums upon such as have rendered themselves conspicuous, by their vast accumulation of literary knowledge; we shall clearly discern the folly of ascribing immortal honours to such as have

signalized themselves only by their consummate skill in the trifling, perishing arts of the poet, the painter, or the statuary.

“From what has been said, however, I could not wish to insinuate, that we ought not to use every lawful effort in our power, that has a tendency to the improvement of the mind, and to expand those noble faculties which we possess. I would only be understood to express, that our pursuits in the refinement and harmonizing of language, ought to be conducted under proper restrictions. But whilst we consider refinement of composition, and a mere monotony of sounds, as secondary objects, where truth and honesty are visible, we must also recollect, that order and method must be attended to, that we may render ourselves intelligible.

“Infinite wisdom has so organized us, that we can reciprocally exchange our ideas; and it is absolutely requisite, that we should make use of a degree of methodical arrangement, in the communication of these ideas. The art of clothing our thoughts in suitable, and uniformly expressive words, is no mean acquisition, and is possessed by few. It may be in a good degree attainable in an early period of life; but it remains to be consummated by age and experience: I believe this can never be engaged in with the same persevering vigour and ultimate success, as in the season of youth. ‘Youth,’ says a dignified writer, ‘is the season of warm and generous emotions. The heart should then spontaneously rise into the admiration of what is great, glow with the love of what is fair and excellent, and melt at the discovery of tenderness and goodness.’

“Convinced then, of the justness of these



unanswerable assertions, what remains but to employ ourselves with unremitting zeal to the improvement of our talents, for the application of which, let it be remembered, we shall one day have to account? Were we more acquainted with the nature of that intelligent principle which is implanted in the human breast, the soul, and its vast capability of improvement, we should spare neither pains nor industry in the pursuit of wisdom, and in the investigation of useful knowledge.

“ Let it, then, be our individual care, to cultivate that share of intellectual knowledge which Providence has dispensed to us; of the value of which we can never be fully sensible, until we have seen how far we are capable of heightening and improving it by our diligence, labour, and assiduity.

“ W. T.”

To — —

(TRANSLATION.)

“ *Lowton; 14 of 11 mo. 1812.*

“ I believe that thou esteemest virtue above all, and consequently thou wouldst not contemplate the recompense of the just, without the strongest emotions. Thou hast doubtless reflected upon the joy which is felt by those who are faithful unto death, when they receive the crown of life; when they have escaped from this world of sin and grief to their eternal habitation, where God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes. Often have I had thoughts like these: with many tears I have read accounts of the death of the just, and have exclaimed with one of old; ‘ Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like unto his.’ But in the midst of these

thoughts we must check ourselves ; from this delightful vision, we must turn our thoughts to our present state, and we shall discover that it is in some respects a dangerous state. A little observation will convince us, that we are surrounded on all sides by enemies, who are seeking, by every possible method, to destroy our eternal peace ; and that we do not feel strength enough to resist them. What then shall we do ? I cannot think that we must submit—no, my friend, let us combat against the trials of the flesh, with all our might, and cry unto him who is strong, to give us power to resist unto blood, in striving against the wicked one : he has promised that he will help us ; and his word is true. Oh ! that I were able to express what I felt when I read the sentence in thy letter, ‘ Take from my heart all that is contrary to thy Divine Will.’ Truly, this is a great work ; but it must be done, and every day’s delay renders it more difficult to accomplish. As to myself, I feel happy that ever I set my feet in the way which leads to life ; I find it easier from day to day to walk therein. I believe with one formerly, that those who fear the Lord shall never want any good thing ; they shall eat of the bread which comes down from heaven, and they shall drink of the waters of eternal life. Whilst the worldly minded shall seek in vain for happiness in the midst of his riches, the humble Christian, however poor, shall be consoled with the possession of true riches, even of that peace which passeth all understanding.

“ W. T.”

It was a frequent practice with him, when his mind was impressed with thoughts on any particular subject, to commit them to paper, for subsequent perusal : of this sort are the two following compositions.

*Thoughts written on the 25th of 12 Month, 1812.*

“ It is a quality peculiar alone to genuine Christianity, that affliction is the soil most congenial to its growth ; persecution the state most favourable to its increase. This distinguishes it from every species of fabricated imposition that has ever appeared in the world. It is this which draws the line of distinction between the religion of Jesus, and the speculative theories of philosophers. Ecclesiastical history affords the most ample proofs of the truth of this proposition.

“ The spread of truth has mostly been rapid and extensive in proportion to the opposition it has met with, and the difficulties it has had to encounter. The unparalleled massacres which happened during the ten persecutions of the primitive Church, and which it was hoped would effect an entire extirpation of the unhappy sufferers, we find had a very contrary effect: the diabolical methods devised for their utter extinction were the very means of making thousands of new proselytes, and of stimulating numbers to become instruments in propagating that faith which its enemies vainly strove to exterminate. .

“ With a mixture of pity and contempt we may contemplate the rage of Popish bigotry so largely evinced throughout the reformation, and who does not see how completely its ends have been defeated ? The words of an expiring prelate,\* (whose name is sufficient to excite veneration,) we live to see fulfilled. With a magnanimity of soul which at once dignifies the man, and exalts the cause for which he suffered, he thus administers comfort to his brother in affliction, ‘ Be

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\* Latimer.

of good cheer, brother Ridley; we shall this day light such a candle in England, as will, by God's grace, never be extinguished.' It appears therefore evident, by the records of history, from the earliest ages to the present time, that a state of trial and affliction has ever been calculated to promote the increase, and preserve the purity of the possessors of revealed religion, when considered collectively as a body; and will not the remark admit with equal propriety of individual application? But alas! in those moments of impatience which are too often felt when under an afflictive dispensation, how hard it is to believe that 'whom he loveth he chasteneth!'

"Considered in that spirit of submission which such a belief must infallibly excite, should we not rather esteem those trials as marks of the Divine favour which have so oft been the subject of our murmuring? Every new exercise of faith *here*, will increase the glory of the beatific vision *hereafter*; every additional testimony of our fidelity, in *time*, shall be abundantly rewarded when we shall have put on a happy *immortality*.

"----- We have considered the efficacy of religion to sustain through the difficulties of life; we have contemplated its sufficiency to pour balm into the wounds of the distressed, and to afford solid comfort in the most trying exigencies; we now come to a more awful and momentous period, the hour of dissolution. It is an undeniable proposition, that if ever consolation and support become necessary, they are peculiarly so in this awful moment. Situated as the soul is, standing upon the brink of an unchangeable state how exquisite must be its sensations! The world swiftly receding from the struggling probationer, eluding his grasp like the phantom

of a vision, and eternity opening on his view, how awful and inconceivably grand must be the emotions which are excited! It is here the triumph of Christianity is rendered complete, over the fanciful chimeras of scepticism, and the dark mists of infidelity. It is here the Christian finds in that invincible courage with which he meets the 'King of terrors,' the most indubitable evidence, that he has not followed 'cunningly devised fables:' he looks at the world which he is going to leave, but it is with an eye of commiseration; he views that into which he is about to enter, with the most lively emotions of complacency, joy, and delight.

"Perhaps no wider contrast could be drawn, than the death-bed of such a character, and that of a modern sceptic. The disciples of infidelity, whatever proof they may have given of their strength of intellect, or force of reasoning, when in the meridian of life, have always found, that it required something more effectual to conquer the timidity of nature, at the conclusion. They may have had refined speculations upon the subject, but speculation will not do now; by denying revelation, they have cut off every means of support, every avenue of comfort. The follies of youth, or the amusements which used to give pleasure in more advanced years, are now become equally insipid; every idea is absorbed, in the dying infidel, by that of instantaneous annihilation; or of having his wretched existence prolonged, merely that his misery may be perpetuated. We might produce well authenticated instances of numbers of these unhappy self-deceivers, who died in the most agonizing tortures of mind, but we are acquainted with but few instances, of those who pretended to meet death with a placid coun-

tenance, like the sophistical Jean Jacques Rousseau. The coolness, apathy, and utter insensibility with which this infatuated man met his fate, have been matter of great triumph to his numerous satellites. But supposing him to have evinced that firmness which his biographers say he was possessed of, as the awful crisis drew near, how striking is the contrast, how manifest is the superiority, of that faith, of that principle, which caused one to exclaim, 'I desire to depart and to be with Christ,' 'I am now ready to be offered up!'

"Stoical apathy is not Christian fortitude. As these states are superinduced by contrary causes, we see they are productive of different effects; the hope of the one is gloomy and selfish, and founded only on probabilities; that of the other is cheerful and animated; a hope not founded on the possible correctness of a system of speculative notions, but on the promises of *Him* whose words stand surer than the heavens; a hope blooming with light, and life, and immortality.

"W. T."

### *Remarks on Man, &c.*

"It is often matter of wonder to me, when I view the myriads of my fellow creatures, all endued in one proportion or other with a rational and thinking faculty, who can yet look on the sublimest of Nature's works with the stupid unconscious gaze of the brute, and appear to be wholly strangers to those refined sensations which constitute the chief happiness of a cultivated mind. How few of the busy throng seem to have leisure to sit down, and calmly consider the object and end of their being, the rank

which they hold in the scale of existence, and the means that will conduce, not only to preserve, but exalt the dignity of their natures ! Destitute, as too many are, of these *first principles*, it is in vain to look for the *finer feelings*. These can only exist in a mind alike regardless of the pleasures or profits of the world ; that can be raised into rapture with the beautiful and sublime of Nature, and at the same time soar to the contemplation of the great First Cause of beauty, order, and harmony. In short, true refinement can only exist, where the happy combination has been effected, of *religion and philosophy*.

“ I have often heard unqualified censure passed on our dignified moralist, Samuel Johnson, for the gloomy medium through which he viewed Human Nature. I would not undertake to clear him from all imputations of this kind ; yet those who are in the hey-day of life and spirits would do well to deliberate before they pronounce. It is perhaps, the safest to consider man in a state of discipline ; that he must unavoidably pass through a portion of misery ; and that, without some such ordeal, he would be incapable of appreciating the value of that higher order of being for which he is designed. It is impossible to ascertain the exact proportion of our happiness or misery ; but the united testimony of all ages declares, that the latter is ours by inheritance, while the former exists merely from accidental causes, and, as such, is every moment liable to interruption. In the language of the east, man is said to be ‘ born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward.’ ”

“ I think no one can look on the endless variety of our species without astonishment. Taking in all the aspects, relations, and dependencies of man, what a complicated, unaccountable being,

he is ! Placed on the confines of two worlds, he is alternately exalted or degraded by their influence ; he is one while made partaker of angelic purity, and then sunk a thousand degrees lower than the meanest reptile. It is in this light that I have always considered history and biography as the most entertaining and instructive branches of reading. By the former, we are acquainted with the origin of the whole species, and their progress towards civilization, whilst the latter exhibits to our view, the virtues and vices of individuals, the follies of youth, or the weakness and eccentricities of old age. Yet, I conceive the delineation of wicked and unprincipled characters, has not so good an effect on our morals, as of those eminent for great virtues. Vice is of so contagious a nature, that habitual contemplation of it lessens the horror which it ought to excite ; while virtue and truth are ever more lovely, and it is their unalterable tendency to rise in our estimation.

“ I often deeply regret, that many who rank high in natural philosophy, should so far forget the study of their own being. This dereliction of principle proceeds, I believe, in a great measure, from the supposed narrowness of the field of enquiry. An experiment with the air pump will afford the highest delight, where a moral, or religious discourse, would fail to arrest the attention. In the investigation of nature, they conceive there is something *tangible*, and within the possibility of demonstration, while the laws of the intellectual world, because liable to many exceptions, and abstruse doctrines, they consider as wholly inexplicable. Thus, from a dread of falling into error and enthusiasm, many totally discard religion from their pursuits, and prefer



the coldness of scepticism, to the generous ardour of Christian piety.

“ W. T.”

At the latter end of this year his health became much impaired; considerable bodily debility came on, attended by great lameness, which rendered his employment particularly painful; and in the 1st month, 1813, he was obliged to relinquish it altogether. The lameness and pain extended from his hip to his foot, and were at first supposed to proceed from rheumatism, but proved to be a disease of the bone, of a peculiar and very painful nature, from which he never entirely recovered. This circumstance confined him much at home, where he was visited by several of his friends, and by some benevolent persons resident in the neighbourhood; also by the clergymen of the parish (of Winwick), who shewed him much kindness, and encouraged him in the prosecution of his studies, particularly the classics. These occupied part of his time during this cessation from labour, the rest he devoted to reading and to correspondence with his friends.

*To — —*

*“ Lowton, February, 1813.*

“ I was glad to find, that the delineation of so great a character as Sir William Jones had employed the pen of so judicious a writer as the illustrious president of the most venerable institution that ever was formed. He seems to have gone through the pleasing, mournful task, of exhibiting to the world, the splendid talents and amiable qualities of his honoured friend, with so

much zeal and fidelity, that when I had read the volume, I was at a loss which of the two had the greatest claims upon my admiration and esteem, the 'mighty genius,' or his illustrious biographer. To one who can relish, in the smallest degree, the pleasures 'that from science flow,' the exploring of the oriental mines of literature, will be considered as a most important event. I have thought that the avidity with which the literati of Europe have studied the eastern languages, and the universal inquiry which seems to be made concerning the present and ancient state of India, happen all in the order of Providence, as it has paved the way for the success of that glorious institution, the British and Foreign Bible Society.

"It gave me much satisfaction, whilst admiring the uncommon vivacity, as well as gigantic vigour, which characterised the mind of Sir William Jones, to see him step forward occasionally as a warm advocate of revealed religion. Many suppose science and true religion are wholly incompatible: this assertion, though not strictly true, has considerable weight. Were we always to be governed by right motives, and did we always form a true estimate of things, we should prefer a saving knowledge of those things which make for our everlasting peace, to every other species of knowledge. I am afraid this is not sufficiently the case: it is not with myself; but there are times when I can say, 'All learning is vanity, but to know thee who art life eternal.' My friend, from the infirm state of thy health, it is not probable that thy years will be protracted to any great length; unite with me therefore, in a solemn determination, that whilst we are endea-

pouring to find out what is rare and valuable in nature, we will endeavour also to become more intimately acquainted with the only source of happiness and supreme bliss. This I can witness, in my measure, is really productive of

‘The soul’s calm sun-shine, and the heart-felt joy  
Which nothing earthly gives, or can destroy.’

“W. T.”

*To G. C.*

*“Lowton, 6th of 3 mo. 1813.”*

“Nothing can ever prevent me from offering in secret, my supplications to our common Father and Preserver, that thine may be a life employed in acts of universal benevolence to thy fellow creatures; that pure, uninterrupted peace, the result of a conscience void of offence, may attend thee through the vicissitudes of time; and that pure, unumixed bliss may be thy portion, through the countless ages of a never ending eternity. Such, my dear friend, is the ardency of my wishes for thy present and future welfare, and particularly in those moments when I have considered the inestimable benefits which accrue from such blessings. Whether it be some natural apathy in my disposition, or whether it arises from just and rational ideas upon the subject, I have never felt much solicitous for thy advancement in worldly good, or for any uncommon success in the accumulation of riches. An acquaintance with Him whom to know is life eternal, in my opinion, eclipses the glory of every other acquisition, and debases the value of wealth, honours, or worldly esteem.

“Ever since I have been favoured to see the

amazing sufficiency of Divine grace, and its consolatory influence, affording solid comfort under the most fortuitous circumstances, enriching the breast of the afflicted cottager with a treasure more durable than all the toys of the splendid monarch, even with that peace 'which passeth all understanding;' ever since I have contemplated with wonder, that the joys of the righteous man rise high in proportion as he sinks deep in trials and affliction; I have viewed, with an eye of indifference, the various gradations of ranks in society. Oh! if the votaries of pleasure, who are busy pursuing their wild career, hastening through paths strewn with roses, to the regions of hopeless and eternal woe; could they but enjoy for one hour, that sweet serenity, that calm and peaceful tranquillity, which diffuses itself over the soul of the true Christian; with what new and inexpressible sensations would they be filled! Would they not cheerfully renounce those vanities which had so often been to them sources of gratification, and embrace all those conditions which are annexed to the promise of a blissful immortality? I never can attempt to express my thoughts upon these inexhaustible subjects, but I see in them, such a grandeur and sublimity, and at the same time, such a vast and immediate importance, as supersede every other consideration. The immense stores of knowledge which natural philosophers have accumulated from age to age, with their many acute researches into the works of creation, justly demand our admiration: but in viewing the proportion and harmony of that august and indestructible fabric, Christianity; in contemplating the depth of that condescension, which constrained the Prince of Peace to put on a veil

of mortality, that he might deliver fallen man from the dominion of sin and corruption, and purchase him a title to an inheritance in glory; when these important truths become the subject of our meditation, how exulting, I had almost said, how rapturous, are the sensations which are excited!

“Hannah More says, in the preface to ‘Practical Piety,’ that ‘mankind do not need so much to be informed, as to be reminded, of their duty.’ I was much struck with the justness of the remark; and as we are not exempt from its application individually, neither can we be, from the guilt which it necessarily includes. I speak from my own experience: I have always found a wide distinction between knowledge and obedience; between learning what are the restrictions imposed by truth, and submitting in unreserved obedience to its discipline. I have proved the efficacy of Divine Grace to be more than sufficient to counteract all those temptations which are peculiar to youth; to preserve the soul in a solid and lasting peace, ‘which the world can neither give nor take away;’ to subdue the passions, and to infuse a resignation which is accommodated to all times and places; I have also found, that to attempt, in our own strength, the subjugation of our passions and evil propensities; to bridle the licentious affections, with any thing less than Divine Grace, is as impracticable, as to endeavour to calm the raging of the tempestuous ocean.

“This last truth I have too often mournfully proved. Oh! that we may make haste, while it is yet day, for ‘the night cometh when no man can work.’ Let us remember, whilst performing those external duties connected with our avocations in life, whilst attending to the many curious

facts which science exhibits to our view, let us ever remember, whatsoever may be our pursuits, that *holiness and happiness are inseparable concomitants.*

“W. T.”

To J. R.

“Lowton, 3d Month, 1813.

“ . . . . There are other things, my dear friend, on which I have much to say, but must content myself with merely touching upon, at present. How fares it with thy soul? Make, I beseech thee, this enquiry strictly. Oh! it is an awful enquiry, suspended as we are, between the two regions of light and darkness, happiness and misery, and those of eternal duration; with nothing to separate us from immediately joining one of these states, but the brittle thread of life (which we see snapped every day around us.) How does it behave us, to solemnly make this enquiry? I think it cannot occur too often: How fares it with my soul? O my friend! that thou mayest become more acquainted with the way of truth, which is a pleasant way to such as are willing to walk in it. I have felt it so, when at times I have been led to a more circumspect walking and conversation; then I have believed the Lord, when he says, ‘his yoke is easy, and his burden light;’ then have I exclaimed, with one of old, ‘Teach me thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in thy truth!’ and ‘Save me, and I shall be saved.’ Simple as these expressions may seem, unadorned by the flowers of rhetoric, they comprehend a great deal when expressed in their fullest sense. May we be able, from a holy resignation, to repeat the first, and be led, from

a sense of the absolute necessity of a Saviour, to cry out in the language of the second.

"O my friend, it is a Saviour that we want; pray that the Lord may make thee more sensible of it than thou hast ever yet been: pray that the film may be removed from thine eyes, that so thou mayst be brought to cry out, 'A Saviour, or I die.' Oh! this must be thy cry and mine, and the cry of every one that would know true peace.

"The Lord is witness to the silent breathings of my soul, that thou with myself may not stop short of this true peace and the enjoyment of it, which can only be known in humility of soul, which is the great door to heavenly virtue. Oh! for that passive lowliness of mind that can say, 'Lord, not my will, but thine be done.' This is the pearl of great price; let a sense of its value fill our souls, and then with what earnestness shall we be led to seek for it! Farewell.

"W. T."

*To G. C.*

*"Lowton, 4th mo. 12th, 1813.*

"I hope I shall be enabled, by Divine Grace, to see things through the right medium, and to set no greater a value upon my earthly connexions, than they really deserve. I am aware, that the best preservative against inflation, is to have a right view of ourselves. So long as we retain this view, we run no risk of being deceived by those marks of distinction that the world may confer upon us. That light which makes known evil, if it shine in the soul, will still discover to every individual, the same deplorable state that was manifested to one of old, when he exclaimed:

‘From the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores.’

“But how difficult is it to keep in this very humbling view of ourselves! Humility does not grow spontaneously, as some vainly imagine; there is nothing like it interwoven in our nature, nor is it ever found to exist in the best natural dispositions. There is, indeed, a counterfeit species to be met with, a sort of bashfulness; but this will not preserve. True humility is of Divine planting, and must be watered with self-denial: it is an emanation from the Deity, illuminating the mind with views of His adorable greatness, and of its own nothingness. May we, by giving heed to the teachings of Him who is near, (and who is willing to communicate every needful thing) become daily wiser in the things that make for peace.

“W. T.”

*To M. C.*

*“Warrington, 5th mo. 9th, 1813.*

“Thy situation in life has enabled thee to view the endless vicissitudes of fashion, and the ruling follies of the day, on a larger scale than I have been able to contemplate them: but, in the least conspicuous situation, there are great blemishes to be seen: the taste of mankind is too depraved, and the state of morals too universally corrupted, to escape the notice of the most superficial observer. But whilst we express our astonishment at the effects, it may not be difficult to discover the true cause, of this state of moral turpitude, in which so large a proportion of society seems to be immersed. One of our sceptics would soon give us the reason; mankind, he



would say, are not yet arrived at a state of perfect civilization; man is too volatile, and does not reflect on the impropriety of such and such propensities, which are unphilosophically termed vices. Is any one seized with a desire of taking from his neighbour his lawfully acquired possessions? he has only to recollect, how injurious to society the system of invading another's property would be, if universally adopted; and being convinced, he calmly desists: is he filled with improper desires? let him think on the mischief that must be eventually produced by indulging such a passion: and they will tell you, that reason again triumphs over nature: or, if a person is subject to violent sallies of passion, reason, by reminding him that he acts inconsistently with his native dignity, will again prove a sufficient corrective.

“It would be difficult to determine, whether folly or presumption is most conspicuous in this way of thinking; for my own part, I cannot think that the great prevalence of vice is owing to the weakness of the understanding of man, or to any natural defect in his intellectual powers: if this were the case, it would only be necessary to state to him the probable effects of evil; and, from prudential motives, he would yield a perfect obedience to truth. But, ah! the wound lies deeper than the brain, and must have something more powerfully applied, ere a cure can be wrought.

“The true cause of the present corrupt state of society, is a want of the fear of God in the heart, a holy filial fear in the inward parts of the mind; where this exists in a person, he does not enter into nice calculations on the advantages of virtue, and the disadvantages of vice; he does not wait to see how far the balance preponderates in

favour of the one, before he ventures to renounce the other; but having received the truth simply, in the love of it, he acts with implicit obedience to its dictates: he does not say, like the sceptic, *I choose* to be virtuous, for, to the Christian, it is more than a mere matter of choice; he acknowledges at every opportunity, his inability, or even will, to do good, and that if it were not for the restraints that are imposed on his passions, by an awful dread of the majesty of his Creator, and of the responsibility of the situation in which he stands, there is no enormity which he would not be found to commit, nor any virtue, however trifling and insignificant, that he would be able to practise.

“There is a saying left upon record, which was spoken by the Redeemer of men, and which, though it has almost universally obtained the assent of professing christians, is rarely found to make a deep impression on the mind. ‘Without me ye can do nothing.’ It but rarely occurs, I say, that we make a formal denial of this great truth; yet it also as rarely happens, that we receive, with a full and entire conviction, the divine admonition. Oh! that we could be persuaded to put away all our own strength, which we have sufficiently proved to be a broken reed, a staff that is of no defence. This I consider as the first step towards the kingdom of heaven, to know ourselves poor, and blind, and naked, and defenceless: until we are stripped of our own armour, we can never ‘put on the whole armour of God.’ This is indeed a blessed state to be in, to feel ourselves lost and undone, for then is the Good Shepherd near, to raise up and heal the wandering soul, and to restore it to His everlasting fold.

“W. T.”

The infirm state of W. Thompson's health caused considerable anxiety amongst his friends, and made them feel desirous that some more suitable employment than that he had relinquished, and not requiring much bodily exertion, should be found for him. With this view it was proposed to him, to undertake the office of schoolmaster at Penketh, near Warrington; the school-room belonging to the Society of Friends, and nearly contiguous to their meeting-house there, being then unoccupied. In the following reply to this proposal, his humility caused him to underrate his own abilities; for the event justified the belief of his friends, that he was well qualified for the undertaking.

*To. G. C.*

*" Lowton, 5th month 16th, 1813.*

" The plan to which thou hast so earnestly requested my attention, must be considered as a proof of disinterested benevolence. The idea of my slender abilities and inexperienced address, being employed in the discharge of so important an office as the presiding over the education of youth, is in no small degree humiliating. But I shall not express all that reluctance which I feel, lest that which is spoken from sincerity, should be mistaken for affectation. I conceive there is a certain sphere of duty in which every one may move, if not with satisfaction to himself, at least with usefulness to his fellow creatures.

" The various gradations of society we may trace from the highest to the lowest; and a small share of discernment is sufficient to perceive, that, like the parts of a complicated piece of machinery, they are strictly dependent on each

other. The adaptation of the parts to each other, is also no less obvious: there appears to be, in many instances, a sort of originality in the constitutions and habits of men, as if Nature had designed them for the very situation in which they are placed. The teacher of occult sciences, the rustic at the plough, or the advocate at the bar, are not always perfect in their art: they may occasionally wander from the point, yet they are seldom found to be endowed with qualifications diametrically opposite to those which their stations require. But perhaps I am attributing that facility, with which every man performs his part on the great stage of life, to improper causes: perhaps I am ascribing that to nature, which only belongs to art. There may be particular propensities; and in the great hive of society, there are few who have not a predilection for some particular employment, in preference to all others. But the truth is, that all men are born with capacities nearly equal, and the difference is made by the spring of activity being damped with the humid mists of poverty; relaxed by lassitude and indolence; or entirely destroyed by an unbounded gratification of the sensual appetites.

“ Few can hope ever to attain to such strength of intellect, as to procure to themselves the voluntary admiration of the learned and great; to have their names transmitted to posterity as the enlighteners and benefactors of mankind; yet every man may, without vanity, contribute his mite to instruct or reform, and though he cannot exult in having done much, he may possess the consciousness of having done well. It is under the influence of these views, that I am led to express my decided approbation of the measure which my friends have adopted for my future

advancement. I can perceive nothing in me like a fitness for the situation, nor dare I affirm, that my morals would be irreproachable, so as to inculcate, by unerring example, sentiments of virtue and religion, in the minds of my pupils; but I would humbly presume, that my habits are not so vicious, as to render their improvement impossible, nor my mental abilities so weak, but they may be strengthened by dint of application. There is, however, one consideration which you seem to have overlooked; I mean, my indisposition; which, as I do not perceive the least amendment, I begin to fear will be of long continuance: I have walked with much more difficulty since my return home than I ever did before; but as this depends alone on the inscrutable will of Providence, I shall leave it, and have only farther to add, that I hope to make good use of what health and spirits remain, in acquiring more perfectly those particular parts of learning which are most likely to be wanted.

“W. T.”

*Thoughts written 5th month 17, 1813.*

“Every one is not born to conquer nations, to plant colonies, or to propagate new and improved systems of philosophy; but every one is endowed with a certain portion of intellect, which it is his duty and interest to improve; it is his duty, because he has received it from his Creator, the supreme source of all good; and no stronger proof can he exhibit of his gratitude to the awful giver, than by improving the gift. It is his interest, because, by calling forth the latent sparks which lie hid in the soul, he may procure to himself a perpetual source of intellectual

pleasures, which are ten thousand times more to be valued than the gross delights of sensual gratifications. In prosperity, he will learn humility; in adversity, fortitude; and in every situation, content: this will be the happy result of a right cultivation of the mind.

"But let no one imagine, that to do this requires only that he should will it to be done; let such remember, that it is by perseverance and a never-ceasing energy, that he can hope to be freed from the shackles of prejudice, and the errors of education; or in any degree overcome the depravity of his corrupt nature. If, however, he courageously use the strength which he hath, and earnestly supplicate the Almighty for more, he may every day obtain new victories over himself; he may soar to new heights, and into new regions of science; and by an exact, and righteous employment of time, he may enjoy a lively anticipation of eternity.

• "W. T."

*To R. O.*

*"Lowton, 22 of 5 mo. 1813.*

"----- I have accidentally met with a sententious period of Lord Bacon's, which I believe will be of use to me in my future reading: 'Some books,' says he, 'are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.' The misfortune is that we too often invert the order; those which it would be our interest to chew and digest well, we hardly deign to taste; while such books as ought only to be tasted, we can chew over and over again.

"----- Dr. Franklin was a useful member of society, and some of his writings seem to have

been eminently serviceable; he was a man of integrity in his dealings, and in the more settled part of his life was generally of good morals; but I cannot help accusing him of scepticism with regard to religion. I can see in him the frugal tradesman and economist, the philosopher, the politician, and the man of good-sense, but I cannot see in him the christian.

“W. T.”

To J. K.

“Lowton, 24th of 5th mo. 1813.

“Few are conscious how much is added to the sublimity of divine truths, by making ourselves acquainted with facts of a different, though not of a less convincing nature, than pure intellectual feelings; I mean the wisdom that is every where displayed in the formation and preservation of the natural world. A farther acquaintance with the *visible* world which we inhabit, would, I believe, often remove that narrow and illiberal turn of thinking, which we see predominant in some who pretend to be deeply acquainted with the mysteries of the *invisible* kingdom. Thus, if science is of no other use, it serves as an excellent corrective in innumerable cases in life: by showing man the dignity of his nature, and fixing a true estimate of his worth, it creates in him a wish to act consistently with the native dignity which he possesses: by showing him that he is only as an atom which dances in the sun-beams, when compared with the universe at large; that with all his acquirements he only forms one link in ‘Nature’s vast progressive chain,’ his views of himself are much abased, and he is filled with awe at the perfec-

tions of that *Being*, who has formed the 'harmonious whole:' he will contemplate with rapture, the display of His wisdom and love, in the minutest parts of creation.

"Such are the dispositions, and such the views which science invariably inspires when under the guidance and restraint of her elder sister, Religion. But I have observed, with feelings too painful to be described, that this is not always the case; it is a well known fact, that some of the most elaborate, scientific works, have been compiled by men of the most depraved minds. When musing over these subjects, I often recur to the French Encyclopædists, some of whom, if I remember right, had the audacity publicly to avow their disbelief of the Supreme Being. But in viewing over the army of refined infidels, I often think upon the immortal names of Milton, Boyle, and Locke, with exultation. Their vast intellectual powers, whilst they took in the whole universe, and demonstrated the laws which maintain the harmony of the celestial spheres, could discover, even in a grain of sand, such marks of the wisdom of the Divine Architect, as kindled in their bosoms a glow of humble gratitude and love. I had, in the warmth of my panegyric, forgot to mention Sir William Jones, that phenomenon of human nature, who alone ought to be considered as an incontrovertible evidence of the truth of Christianity, and the sublimity of its doctrines. He was acquainted with the various systems of theology, that have appeared in the world, and had, no doubt, drawn accurate deductions of their comparative worth, by considering the influence they have had on society, as exhibited in the page of history; yet we see him give the decided prefer-



ence to Christianity, as being the best calculated to promote our welfare *here*, and to ensure our happiness *hereafter*. The encomium which he passed upon the Bible deserves to be printed in letters of gold and suspended over the entrance of every building dedicated to the Muses.

“W. T.”

Permission having been obtained for the use of the school-room at Penketh, there appeared nothing to prevent W. T. from immediately entering upon his new occupation, but the infirm state of his health. By the advice of a medical friend, who showed him numerous tokens of regard, and whose professional skill was exerted for him on many occasions, he determined to try the effect of the warm salt-water bath, and for that purpose went to Liverpool in the 6th month, 1813. There he remained nearly three weeks, at the house of some hospitable Friends, and used the bath almost every day, but without its producing any mitigation of his complaint.

His lameness and inability to move about, prevented him from seeing much of the place, but the visits which he paid to one of the public libraries gratified him exceedingly.

*To R. O.*

*“Liverpool, 21st of 6th month, 1813.*

“I have made a second visit to the Athenæum, and spent there about eight hours with much delight. It would be superfluous to state with what sensations I viewed the accumulated wisdom of so many ages, or with what emotions I saw myself surrounded by more than six thousand volumes: it was a gratification which I never before expe-

rienced, nor could have reasonably hoped for. I spent much time in looking over Sir W. Jones's works, which are uncommonly interesting.

"Those only can appreciate genius as it deserves, who possess the most of it themselves, nor will the most stupendous monuments of philosophical research, be viewed with admiration and regard, except by those, who, having arrived at a degree of proficiency in the same pursuits, have proved, how laborious is the cultivation of the human intellect, and how hardly earned is the meed of literary fame. It is evident upon this ground, that the reputation of this great man will daily increase, and will keep pace with the enlightening and civilization of mankind.

"I hope thou understandest the admiration which I here express in its proper sense, and no farther, viz. as subordinate in its nature, to that awe and veneration with which we ought to contemplate those characters, who may be called the champions of truth, and who are eminent only by their virtue, and the undeviating purity of their lives. But here I may observe, that the eminently virtuous appear amiable to our view, only in proportion as we are governed by the same divine principle which actuated them. The martyr at the stake, presents to our view, a scene of inexpressible sublimity, but we must become influenced by the same indifference for the world, and the same awful regard for eternity, which enables the sufferer to despise the sorrows that are for a moment; we must view things through the same medium, and possess, in a measure, the same dispositions, before we can see him in that exalted situation in which he stands.

"There are few objects relating to literature, which may not be communicated with ease from

one mind to another ; but ah ! when we endeavour to describe *that principle* which ought to direct us through the few fleeting moments of time ; when we would speak of that peace which is the result of yielding an unreserved obedience to its requirings, or of the confusion and darkness which pervade the soul, when its admonitions are forgotten ; and that vessel which ought to have been dedicated to the most sacred of all uses, and become a recipient for divine love, is defiled with the love of the world : when these subjects are to be discussed, what empty and unmeaning sounds are words, and how imperfectly can we convey heavenly things through an earthly medium ! The unreasonable value which we are apt to place upon mere human acquirements, has often appeared to me of so much moment, that I have almost been ready to prefer ignorance, and to think that man the happiest, whose knowledge was the most circumscribed. We mostly pass from one extreme of error to another ; may our views become daily more enlightened concerning these, the most important of all subjects, and may we be taught by that pure wisdom which is from above !

“ I enjoy every blessing that can be desired except the free use of my limbs, and I do feel resigned to the will of Him who has chastened me with an easy hand ; for my own good ; if it be His will that I speedily recover, it will be cause of thankfulness, but if not, there is a Power that can enable me to bear with patience and fortitude every farther trial.

“ W. T.”

The use of the bath having failed to remove the complaint, and apprehensions being entertained

that permanent lameness would ensue, it was resolved to try the effect of a caustic application; for this purpose he went to Warrington, (where suitable accommodations had been procured for him,) in order that he might have the advantage of daily attendance from the individual before mentioned. He continued at Warrington six weeks, engaged principally in reading, and in preparing himself for the engagement upon which he was about to enter.

*To M. C.*

*Warrington, 11th of 7th month, 1813.*

"----- Though taste perhaps cannot be acquired where it does not inherently exist, it admits of vast cultivation; and how striking is the contrast between the man of taste, and he who has not learned to think—deplorable state! And yet there are thousands of this kind within the sphere of our observation. Dear sensibility! no stores of gold can purchase this treasure, nor could the mines of Golconda furnish enjoyments that would be its equivalent in value. Let my bodily sufferings be ever so severe, let me be banished to the most inhospitable clime, or shut out from the society of men, rather than lose the invaluable gift of intellect; its proper use creates pleasures, for the loss of which, millions of worlds could not compensate.

"It is the exercise which is made of the finer feelings by your sex, that entitles them to so large a share of our admiration. In reply to thy interrogation, what it is that induces men to trust the young heirs of nature to the superintendence of beings whom they deem of so inferior a rank, I would say, that, independent of necessity, there

are very superior qualities which characterise them, as being alone proper 'to teach the young idea how to shoot,' as being calculated to soften and improve the dispositions of the species by their sensibility of feeling, whilst the understanding is rapidly informed by their innocent loquacity. To you it is given to form the minds of the wise, the good, and the great, the monarch, and the philosopher: to your fostering care the world is indebted for those great luminaries of genius, who have humanized mankind by means of salutary laws, or improved their morals by an unerring attachment to virtue and truth.

"W. T."

In the 8th month, 1813, W. Thompson removed to Penketh and opened his school, being then in the twentieth year of his age. He had derived considerable benefit from the judicious means adopted to remove his lameness; and his general health was much improved by nutritious diet and careful attention. What his feelings were on entering upon so novel and arduous an engagement, appears by some of the following letters.

"*Penketh, 8th mo. 13th, 1813.*

"My mind has been much more composed since I left W. and seems to have participated in the tranquillity which reigns in this rural spot. The way at present seems more open, and I feel little doubt but my present allotment is the right one.

"W. T."

*To M. G.*

"*Penketh, 14th August, 1813.*

"The prospect before me seems to present an encouraging appearance, and I hope, that Provi-

dence, who has so miraculously opened the way to my present undertaking, will continue his favour, that it may tend to my own satisfaction and the benefit of my fellow-mortals. When I take a retrospective view, I see every reason to trust for a continuation of divine favour. And yet strongly as this chain of events proves the immediate care of an all-wise invisible being, I am sensible that it by no means supersedes the necessity of my own exertions.

"----- When duty and inclination point different ways; when the corrupt inclinations of the heart are perpetually tending to that which is known to be prohibited, and to walk in the way which ultimately leads to destruction; what guide shall we follow? what pilot shall steer us clear of the rocks on which thousands have already split? How unavailing is the knowledge of science—of those 'deep skilled in algebraic lore.' They cannot get clear from the entangling net of corruption, nor conquer with their utmost efforts the prevalency of one besetting sin. No man ever could wrestle with that fell monster sin, or overcome by his natural strength his secret propensities to evil.

"Education and the refinements which necessarily exist in a state of civilization may do much, but their effect is confined to the exterior deportment. The branches are lopped, but the poisonous principle remains in the root. Our virtues rarely bear any proportion to the extent of our knowledge. A man may be conversant with every branch of moral ethics; he may be orthodox in his creed to the smallest point; whilst in practice he may be an atheist, and as far from observing the code of christian morals as the most unlettered and illiterate savage. The poison

is of too fatal and corroding a nature to be acted upon successfully by the mere will of the inheritor. It remains for grace to accomplish the mighty work; this is the never failing corrective of evil; its power is omnipotent, and no case can be so desperate but its sovereign virtue will heal. It is a proof-armour against every temptation, it is a preservative in every time of danger; in short, Divine Grace is that bright emanation from the Deity, which leads back to Himself. But the way lies through a thorny path, filled with many enemies and besetments, through a series of trials and provings: and here is its sovereign power made manifest, in overcoming these obstacles, and enabling the humble soul to go on conquering and to conquer. Those souls that are willing to be clothed with its heavenly influence shall be helped from grace to grace, and from strength to strength; armed by its vivifying power, they shall burst asunder the chains with which the giddy multitude is led captive; whilst inhabitants of earth, they will centre their desires in Heaven, considering themselves as probationers for that state of unmixed bliss, which shall commence when time shall be no more. Here then is that divine remedy for every spiritual disease, which God in mercy has provided, through our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the balm of Gilead which is given for the restoration of Adam's lost race; and it is given freely, without any other condition than that we make it the rule of our obedience, and the guide of our actions. 'Behold I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' When we consider that this is the language of the

Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, to sinful worms of the earth; how astonishing, how incomprehensible does it appear! The condescension is such, that we should be led to doubt its reality, if we were not told that his mercy is as infinite as his other attributes, and that we were created expressly for the purpose of enjoying his favour, and of becoming recipients of his love. Ah! my dear friend, let us but get right views of our deplorable state by nature, and of the gratitude we owe to Him, who by his own blood has cancelled the mighty debt; who, after having purchased our reprieve from eternal death, condescends to visit our hearts, and wooes our acceptance of it. Could we look into the adorable mystery of human redemption, and take a view of those inestimable privileges which we enjoy, our language would be changed from despondency to exultation; we should exclaim with the prophet: 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; behold thy King cometh unto thee!'

"But what language is copious enough to express the aspirations and feelings of a truly thankful heart? Those only know the inefficiency of human words, who yield themselves to the influence of that mollifying power, which can soften and reduce even hearts of stone. I believe thou art no stranger to this; thou hast tasted both of the terrors of the Lord for sin, and of the peaceable fruits of righteousness; and hast been enabled to live in a measure of obedience to the Heavenly Teacher: but I would humbly advise thee to keep in remembrance, that the way to holiness is progressive, and continually admits of increase; that though our experience may have been large in former days, there are still new



acquisitions in our power to make, or still new depths of humility which it is our interest to reach. I do feel desirous that thou shouldst be brought forward in the things which make for peace, and know this grace which I have before spoken of, to become the power of God unto salvation.

“W. T.”

“25th August, 1813.

“As far as prospects can be made the criterion to judge by, of future success, there is every reason to hope, that with the blessing of God, my small beginning will make an honourable termination. I am now launched upon the ocean of life, and have undertaken to pilot others through the rocks of error and youthful folly, at a season the most critical. How much a giving way to the presentations of evil may at some future period obscure my way, I dare not venture to predict; but I hope, at this time, I am sensible from what source my strength must come, and that the success of my present undertaking, depends upon rectitude of conduct, and the most persevering exertions.

“W. T.”

“9th mo. 5th, 1813.

“The satisfaction arising from my engagement at Penketh school, exceeds every thing my most sanguine wishes had entertained. The peace of mind, the calm confidence with which I have proceeded, and the bright prospect in life which it has opened before me, are all of a nature beyond what I can express. The satisfaction resulting from a conscientious discharge of

the duties of my station, is of such a nature, as to put it beyond the shadow of a doubt, that I have taken a right step in life, and one which Providence designed for me.

“W. T.”

To T. T.

“Penketh, September 20th, 1813.

“Providence has placed me here by a series of events, compared with which I know no parallel; my bodily indisposition, my particular religious sentiments, every thing has concurred to assist in removing me from a state of abject poverty and obscurity, to a situation, which, if its duties be rightly discharged, will, with the blessing of Providence, procure me an honourable independence. My former manner of life was most unfavourable to mental improvement; the monotonous and unsentimental circle of duties, within the precincts of a manufactory, are calculated to damp the ardour of genius, and to chill the working of the social affections. My mind is by nature indolent; and had I continued immured in this mental sepulchre, I believe I should almost have become as destitute of ideas, as the machines that were under my care; but I am now, through a kind Providence, placed in a station which affords ample scope for the mind; which affords me incalculable benefit from the instruction I impart to others. Self-government, that universal requisite, is never more needful than where I now stand.

“W. T.”

To M. C.

“Penketh, 20th September, 1813.

“Sometimes when ruminating on the causes of such various modes of thinking, I am led to

conclude, that a want of unanimity of sentiment, is not so much occasioned by weakness of intellect, as corruption of heart. The great system of morality is made up of unalterable positions, which are equally binding at all times and in all places. One of those which our great master has particularly enjoined, is to cherish meekness and brotherly love; and to show who is our brother, he has described a stranger, sick and distressed, in the parable of the good Samaritan.

“The advent of the same Divine lawgiver was announced, as bringing peace and good-will on earth. A desire to promote the accomplishment of the heavenly message ought to form the basis of our reasonings, and the rule of our actions. It is a first principle which we ought never to lose sight of. If then, by this criterion we judge of the political state of Europe, how legible are the characters in which its guilt is implicated! How great is the infamy attached to the inventors of the thousand diabolical machinations by which it is torn! Can the meed of applause be due to those, who in order to attain it, have forced their fellow-creatures from the innocent occupations of a rural life, to shed their blood in adjusting a vain and groundless quarrel; who have broken asunder the tender bands of connubial felicity in thousands of families, and half peopled the world with orphans? What are the triumphs of the conqueror but so many harbingers of desolation to mankind? But these mournful truths are forgotten by the deluded multitude. Brutality is termed courage; pride, honour, and lawless rapacity, a just and reasonable preservation of the rights of nations. The pompous eulogies pronounced over departed heroism, the specious monumental inscriptions,

with all the ensanguined trophies of martial valour, must vanish away before the steady and unerring lamp of religion. Those that ravage the earth with fire and sword may assert their attachment to that divine handmaid, and justify their most horrid actions, under pretence of advancing her interests;—but believe them not: no casuistry can disprove, that religion is wholly inimical to hostile pursuits; its high and holy Founder exhibits in his own person the example, whilst he delivers the precept, that peace, harmony, and brotherly concord, should be the distinguishing characteristics of his humble followers.

“W. T.”

To — —

“*Penketh, 4th of 10th mo. 1813.*”

“Thy letter came to my hands in one of those desponding moments, in which intellectual animation seems to be suspended; when the little light that remains, only serves to increase the horror of the gloom, and to point out imaginary woes in the bosom of futurity. It was in this desolate state, that I sat down to peruse it; and if thou hast ever experienced the full tide of recollection of past mercies, and the full weight of gratitude to the instruments of those mercies, I need not describe the sensations which accompanied my relief. That God who has cared for my wants, and filled my cup with good things; has also given me a thankful heart. How often do I offer up my cries and tears for thy preservation! how often do I beseech the Almighty to ‘shower down his blessings’ upon thy head, and to guard thee in an especial manner, from the snares that may be strewed in thy path! I am

persuaded, that the spirit of the supplication can only come from on high; and when that holy and heart-searching flame is vouchsafed to kindle the sacrifice, I believe it will ever be accepted. At particular seasons, of late, I have been led to desire thy welfare, with an anxiousness, which I am confident does not proceed from any inherent disposition of my own. But it would indeed be strange, if a heart could be found so obdurate, as not to melt at the idea of a benevolence, which it would have been presumption to have hoped to meet with, in a being within the precincts of frail mortality.

“The account of thy fluctuating and unsettled state of health, gave me much concern, I commend thee to the giver of patience, to Him who can sustain the soul with hope, even in the valley of the shadow of death. Blessed fortress, religion! that affords security, alike from the storms of adversity, and the alluring baits presented in a state of prosperity and affluence. Here, we all stand on the same footing, however dissimilar in other respects, or however various our allotments in life; it is by the same free and unmerited redemption, that we are purchased from eternal death, and made participators of the Divine nature. In whatever part we may have suffered losses, the same Heavenly Physician can alone bind up our wounds. When viewed in this light, how do the petty distinctions which wealth has created vanish! We see mankind as one universal brotherhood, having one common Lord and Father, and individually destined, by the grand scheme of redemption, to exist in a state of unceasing felicity.

“When I meet with one who conceives himself entitled, by his ample possessions, to behave

with an air of insolence and self-importance towards his inferiors, surely, I exclaim, this person has never seen the conditions on which he holds the precarious tenure of life; he has never extended his ideas so far as to consider, that there is a Fountain of light which will dissipate the idle dreams of ambition; in the blaze of which, nothing but pure gold can remain untouched: it is virtue alone that confers superiority in the sight of the Almighty. We shall be weighed in the balance, not for the strength of our intellects, the extent of our attainments, or the conspicuous rank we have held amongst men: the investigation will concern, whether we have rightly husbanded our time, whether we have put off a conformity to the world, and sought after that temper and spirit that were in Jesus, by becoming transformed into his divine image.

“How thankful I have reason to be for my state of retirement; on a spot where every literary help may be procured, and that enjoys every advantage of refinement; I stand as a quiet and impartial spectator of the world. Whilst through the medium of books, I view the present and ancient character of mankind, and contemplate the flux and reflux of morality and religion, I cheerfully contribute my mite towards leavening the great mass, by a strict attention to the morals of those committed to my care. Permit me again to congratulate thee, as the chief instrument that has been concerned in my accession to a state of so much importance in the scale of existence, a state that includes so many duties immediately connected with the well-being of my species.

"I clearly perceive, that if due attention be not paid to the moral habits of children, learning is of no use. From the nature of the foundation laid in the minds of children at an early age, is often raised a superstructure, either of vicious and perverted dispositions, or of an honourable and virtuous integrity; if the latter qualities predominate, happy is their possessor, inasmuch as, by the enlightening aid of science, he is gifted with the *means* of doing good: But if the former, (as is too frequently the case,) of what use can learning be to such an individual? He who has resolved to be vicious, will find human lore, to be a deadly weapon turned against his own bosom. The wisdom of an angel is not worth desiring, if unaccompanied with the simplicity of 'a little child.' As most of my pupils are very young, I feel anxious to impress on their tender minds, what I conceive to be the leading principle of religion, a knowledge of the Supreme Being: the first communication on this head, if rightly made, often leaves an impression on the memory, which time can never efface. I think the creatures are the best medium by which the minds of children can be led to a contemplation of the Creator; their ideas are simple and confined; they can be taught but few things by induction: but critical as the management of such a delicate and highly important point is, I am inclined to hope, that that parent or tutor who seriously engages in the work, will be helped, and will find a corresponding concern, generally to cover the minds of his pupils; or if it should seem to fall to the ground for the present, being cast in faith, on the waters, it will assuredly be found after many days.

"W. T."

To J. A.

*“ Penketh, 6th Oct. 1813.*

“ The time that has passed since I had the pleasure of thy conversation, has been chequered with both joys and sorrows, with moments of despondency, and with seasons of triumphant hope. What a state of alternation is this life! who would wish to sojourn here for ever? Often, when elated with confidence to-day, we are sunk in despair to-morrow; and one victory obtained over our enemies, only leads to new and more arduous combats. Yet there are resting places by the way. He who was evilly entreated for our sakes, having trod the vale of mortality, has not been unmindful of the wants and weaknesses of his tried followers. With the cup of bitterness he has mingled many sweets: the gloom of midnight darkness is often irradiated by the brightness of the morning star; and the bleak winter of adversity rendered less rigorous by the anticipation of future glory.

“ I am now actively engaged in prosecuting the duties of the station to which the partiality of my friends has promoted me, and I find it productive of solid satisfaction; indeed, my most sanguine hopes are more than realized. There is every probability of my acquiring a comfortable state of independence, whilst conferring an essential benefit on my fellow-creatures, in assisting to mould the genius and habits of the rising generation. Ah! my friend, what should I have done in such an undertaking, if my habits and dispositions had not previously received a tincture of religion? Without this regulating principle for my guide, how should I attempt to form the minds of others, to check



the risings of vice, and to call forth and encourage the buddings of virtue? In this way, my employment, though sweet, is at least so far arduous, that I find it my interest to keep my ear open to instruction, and whilst pointing my tender charge to the silent monitor in their own breasts, to endeavour from its sacred dictates to form the rule of my conduct. I think I have been sensible of the benefit of thy prayers for my preservation of late. The composure and steadiness with which I am enabled to govern my pupils, the inexpressible peace I am at times enabled to enjoy, and the marks of distinction which I continue to receive from my numerous friends, are each matter of abundant thankfulness; they are favours which I neither deserve nor expected to enjoy. I hope the union formed between our spirits, will only be consummated when the stream of time shall have ceased to flow.

“ W. T.”

*To J. A. B.*

*“ Penketh, 7th Nov. 1813.*

“ I suppose thou hast heard of the change which has taken place in my affairs, with regard to my commencing the arduous and important office of schoolmaster. For the last three months, my attention has been chiefly devoted to the duties of my new station, a station to which my most sanguine hopes never dared to aspire; which nothing but the partiality of my friends would have supposed me capable of filling. My attempt has been hitherto crowned with tolerable success, and is in the highest degree congenial to my particular pursuits; by teaching others, I myself may learn; and by having

to enforce maxims of prudence and right reason, I may be led to adopt them as the basis and regulating principles of my own conduct. Few situations, I conceive, require a greater concentration of talent, of good sense, and of every christian virtue, than the one I am now placed in. It is a situation, which almost compels to scientific improvement, and from the various dispositions to be studied in the rising generation, many useful hints may be gathered relating to the best of all knowledge, that of our own hearts. I now perceive more than ever, the need of possessing a well-regulated imagination, and affections subject to the control of reason. Children are, I conceive, at an early age, acute observers of the minds of their tutors and guardians; they consider them as oracles of wisdom, and by them may the ductile mind of youth be led to admire and practise virtue, or to become familiar with the horrid form of vice.

“W. T.”

In his correspondence, it was a frequent practice with him, to mingle something good with what he had to narrate, or to enforce some christian maxim, or rule of conduct, by the circumstances under which he wrote. The following extract from a letter to a young man, just about to depart for America, exemplifies his constant care to impart good advice, and his solicitude for the best interests of his friends.

*To ---*

*“Penketh, 29th Nov. 1813.”*

“I have only time to commend thee to God, and to say, that if we are not favoured to meet

again in time, I trust we shall at least see each other in a happy eternity. This I say, in the supposition that thou wilt endeavour to become more and more solicitous after the one thing needful. Let me entreat thee to remember, that nothing but having our passions subject to the control of religion, can confer true happiness. Thou wilt have many temptations to encounter, and many disadvantages to cope with, the chief of which, will be an absence from serious and religious people, and having to associate with men, who have not the fear of God before their eyes: but to balance this, it may be said, that God is in all places, and that His power is every where the same to preserve us from evil. Let thy thoughts then, my dear friend, be occasionally turned from a concern after the things that perish, to a consideration of those which will endure when time shall be no more.

“ W. T.”

•  
*To J. R.*

“ *Lowton, 25th December, 1813.*

“ I am thankful that, although my body is afflicted, my mind was never more at ease; I am enabled in some measure, to trust in Him, who is mighty to save, and to believe that all which He appoints, will end well; would that I could always resign myself up to His dispensations! But it is hard work to do so at all times. Let us both endeavour to lean on the staff which cannot be broken. The resources which literature afford to the mind, may do in the day of prosperity, but when real troubles come, they are broken reeds; they rather depress than support the mind. Nothing but an humble confidence in that

strength which never faileth, can carry us through the complicated scenes of this world.

“W. T.”

*To J. A.*

“*Lowton, December 26th, 1813.*”

“In the few months that have elapsed since I was last at Lowton, time has left the most visible marks of his ravaging hand: some have entered that land from whence no traveller returns, and others are lying on the verge of the same unchangeable state of being. How awful, O God, are thy visitations! and how should our souls lie prostrate at thy feet! Whether we look at the changes which individuals sustain, or at the wrecks of empires, and concussions of kingdoms, our admiration is equally excited; every thing proclaims aloud, that ‘the fashion of this world passeth away.’ I am thankful in saying, that I have, of late, felt a renewed concern to be found amongst those who are doing their master’s will; of that happy number who, notwithstanding the confusion of this terrestrial scene, will be finally gathered into one fold, and there made to repose in safety under one shepherd for ever. I often remember the injunction of the Son of David: ‘In all thy gettings, get wisdom; for the value of her is more than of gold or silver.’ Oh, that they who are given up to lying vanities, could see the intrinsic value of this supreme of treasures!

“W. T.”

*To J. J. H.*

“*Lowton, January 8th, 1814.*”

“----- In Burns we have another melancholy proof, that virtue is not necessarily con-

comitant with great genius; that the most splendid talents can by no means ensure happiness to their possessors; and that on the other hand, when degraded by criminal indulgence they add to the weight of guilt and misery. It is with the greatest concern I contemplate his exit off the stage of life. With a mind that knew no bounds, that could call up images from every part of the creation, and give permanency to the most delicate sensations, he fell a prey to the most destructive of vices, a lamentable instance of human depravity.

“When we consider the native greatness of Burns’s soul, the brilliancy of his wit, and the exuberance of his imagination; that awful deference which super-eminence never fails to excite, commands us to tread lightly on his ashes, and to throw the cloak of charity over those frailties which we ourselves with difficulty avoid. If we have but right views of ourselves, and of human nature, it will greatly weaken the malignancy of our censures. The triumph of criticism will give way to tears of humiliation, and before we exult over the weakness of a fellow-creature, we shall try and prove our own ways, that they be right in the presence of the Most High.

“W. T.”

At the beginning of the year 1814, his attention was directed almost exclusively to an advancement in those branches of knowledge which would be of use to him in his occupation: amongst these studies, mensuration, algebra, and some other parts of the mathematics, appear to have occupied most of his time, when not engaged in teaching; and he wrote but few letters during this year.

The papers which he left behind him afford abundant proofs of his industry; he made copious extracts from many authors, and wrote much to facilitate his acquirement of several branches of knowledge. Besides French and Latin, the study of which he still continued, he paid some attention to the Greek and Hebrew languages. Though possessing a taste for poetry, and able to appreciate its beauties, he made but few attempts at poetical composition, and these were chiefly confined to some stanzas on religious subjects, and a few acrostics on the names of some of his friends, which, though not devoid of ingenuity, possess nothing very remarkable.

*To J. A.*

*“ Penketh, 21st January, 1814.*

“ Amongst all my benefactors, there is none of whom the recollection excites more grateful emotions than thyself: there are, it is true, who have more largely contributed to my temporal necessities; but who has cared more for my spiritual wants than thou hast? It was under thy example and encouragement that my most permanent religious impressions were made. Thou wilt remember some of the conversations we had, when peace, heavenly peace, was our covering: Oh! what a foretaste of heaven did I enjoy in those blissful moments! It was then that I received those sublime views of christianity, and those deep convictions of my own innate depravity, which no words can express, except to those that have passed through the same.

“ Since that time the allurements of sensual pleasures, the effects of novelty, or an unguarded

intercourse with the world, have often conspired to relax my diligence, and to obscure the brightness of the manifestation; yet it bursts forth again with meteoric blaze, and at intervals I have felt the full force of my first impressions. May I not hope that the same mercy will ever be extended, and that my last end, unlike the unrighteous man's, will be better than my first? I have lately been led to make more particular enquiry into my case, from the consideration of the state of a backslider, who was once a class-leader. He is unhappy, and has lost much of the power to discriminate between good and evil. When we carry our disobedience so far, as to abuse even infinite mercy, God punishes us with the most dreadful of all punishments, *viz.* a want of moral perception. So long as we can discriminate between right and wrong, there is at least a probability of our choosing the right; but where this is extinguished, what darkness must pervade the mind; yea, 'a thick darkness which may be felt!' May we 'walk in the light,' while it is vouchsafed us, and so become 'children of the light!'

"W. T."

*To J. R.*

*"February 4th, 1814.*

"Religion still appears to me (as I hope it ever will) the most awful and important subject that can come under our investigation; it is often consolatory to my feelings to reflect, that as we are both in some measure impressed with this, our friendship rests on a permanent, unshaken basis, and is cemented together with an indissoluble bond. Oh! my dear friend, how ought

we to prize that light which God has graciously given us! I fear we too often forget, that we are favoured above many others; favoured with that, which the riches of the east cannot purchase, viz. a discovery of our own lost states, and the unspeakable riches and fulness in Christ Jesus. The calls on us for gratitude and obedience, are loud and piercing; if we do but get our deaf ears unstopped, every object in nature has a voice; every thing proclaims, that the fashion of this world passeth away, and that the time is swiftly approaching, when we must stand before angels and men, to be judged for the deeds done in the body. Under such circumstances as these, is it a small privilege that we are awakened to a sense of our state; are enabled to discern the nature and effects of sin in its various forms; and to see that all is vanity, but serving God in true humility of heart? We cannot be too thankful, too earnest, too obedient. Let us work while it is called to-day, remembering that the 'whole world lieth in wickedness;' let us not assimilate ourselves to the corruptions thereof. I believe, were we to devote our *whole selves* to God, we should indeed be as shining lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. The odour of a righteous man's conversation will diffuse itself around, and will more or less influence the most profligate characters. There is one thing, which above all I think is the most detrimental to the interests of religion—I mean *inconsistency*. With this I have often sorrowful cause to reproach myself. To appear at some times rigidly serious in our words and looks, and at others, to join in acts of folly, with wicked and worldly minded people, may disgrace, but can never adorn, the religion of the holy Jesus.



“ I have thought how little we avail ourselves of the gracious promise, ‘ Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.’ O my friend ! what are we doing, that we do not get delivered from those evil passions and sinful propensities, which burthen our minds, and hinder us from lying down in peace, day by day ? The blessed invitation is gone forth, and yet we neglect to ask for such things as we immediately stand in need of. Does our faith want renewing, our doubts removing, our hopes strengthening ? Do we want an increase of the heavenly virtues, charity, patience, chastity, brotherly kindness ? Behold the Great Master stands ready to confer all these blessings. In the days of his flesh, he went about seeking objects of mercy, and healing those who had no power to heal themselves ; and it is yet his delight to shew forth his great power and loving kindness, by healing the spiritually diseased, and by bringing such as are enthralled in the bondage of sin, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Seeing then, that there is bread enough in our Father’s house, let us no longer delay to return, and, with all humility, cast ourselves before a throne of grace. If we abhor ourselves as in dust and ashes, we shall find acceptance ; for God is ever ready to receive, with open arms, the repentant sinner.

“ Since the 14th year of my age, when it pleased infinite mercy to visit me with some divine visitations, I have often been favoured to see the exceeding beauty of holiness. Religion, as appearing in the person and character of Jesus Christ, has seemed to me, at times, a system full of the most resplendent beauties. Who can look on the sublime and unparalleled virtues, which

adorned the life of this Divine Person, and not feel their hearts melt with sentiments of awe, gratitude, and adoration? But I also conceive the life and conduct of every real disciple, will present, though in a less degree, the same uniform and consistent picture of innocence and truth. The term *Christian*, conveys to me a very different idea to what is implied in its common acceptation. If the standard of excellence in Christianity is the super-eminent virtues of its Great Founder, then he only is a Christian, whose mind is adorned with the same heavenly temper and dispositions that were found in Christ. I need not remark to thee, how difficult it is to become, in any degree, like so *great an original*. Yet, hard and impossible as it apparently is, we must come to it, or we can never be saved; there is no unclean thing can enter the gates of pearl; nothing but lamb-like innocence can entitle us to admission there; nothing short of *holiness* can ensure to us a happy eternity.

"I have been led to the above remarks, from a renewed concern, that we may each of us begin, with all diligence, to do the work that is appointed us in our day; and that for such things as we lack, we may come to the fountain of infinite mercy, and partake largely of that grace which is able to become our wisdom, our sanctification, and our redemption.

"If religion included nothing more than morality, there were less need of solicitude: no man can accuse us of any flagrant breach of good morals; but I thank God, we are each of us sensible, that something more is meant by the term. I hope we consider religion to be what it really is, a state of habitual watchfulness, as in the *immediate* presence of the great Omniscient; a

fervent charity to all mankind; a sincere love of virtue and truth, and an abhorrence of sin, wherever, or in whatsoever shape it is found. O my dear friend! I long that we may dwell for ever in this holy, reverent frame of mind; then, indeed would our peace flow as a river, and our righteousness as the waves of the sea. Then should we be as the woman that was clothed with the sun; having the moon and stars, (with all earthly affections,) under her feet. Every cross would be sweetened, and every affliction rendered grateful to our taste, by that love which is stronger than death; and which is emphatically said *to overcome all things*. Farewell, dear friend! I feel a strong presentiment that we shall yet live to see good days; to know the renovating power of the spirit of Christ, which passeth from death unto life.

“W. T.”

*To M. C.*

*“Penketh, 2d mo. 23d, 1814.”*

“The course of studies in which I am embarked, has precluded me from much of that light kind of reading which has entertainment only for its object. Indeed I feel less relish for this species, than formerly. The mind, like the body, if wound to a certain pitch of vigour, requires more solid and indigestible food. If I mistake not, I shall become strongly prejudiced against the reigning fashion of the age—novels. There is every thing in nature that can improve the understanding, or entertain the imagination, without requiring the aid of artificial intrigue, or fictitious adventures.

"If we stand in need of those severe exercises which strengthen the intellect, and which may be termed the gymnastics of the mind, what ample scope is afforded us in searching out the physical causes which produce those astonishing effects, visible in every part of the great laboratory of nature! If we possess fine imaginations, the range is not less extensive, the beautiful and true sublime are profusely scattered, and visible at every step. If we survey the creation, with right views of the uses, ends, and importance of each part, and with a constant reference to the great Author of the whole, we shall discover *realities* worthy the employment of all our mental faculties; nor shall we find any leisure to yield to the contemplation of ideal worlds, or to the wanderings of a distempered imagination.

"W. T."

In the 6th month, 1814, he commenced house-keeping, and one of his sisters came to reside with him; this added greatly to his domestic comfort: his school also increased in an encouraging manner. He now thankfully felt the superiority of his present station over that which he had quitted: he had raised himself, by his merit and talents, from a life of hard labour and obscurity, to a situation of respectability and comparative independence; engaged in a reputable and useful employment—enjoying the society of a few valued friends—partaking largely of the pleasures which arise from the cultivation of the understanding and the love of reading, with ample means of indulging in those pleasures, his utmost wishes were more than realized, and the measure of his happiness seemed full.

He kept a record of the titles of the books which he perused, sometimes accompanied by a short analysis of their contents, with extracts of remarkable passages, both in English and French; and not unfrequently he prefixed a short criticism on the merits of the work, or the character of its author. It may suffice here, to insert one or two short specimens of these productions.

"1815, August 10th.

*"Curiosities of Literature.*

"The plan of this compilation is extremely desultory. It contains, however, a variety of entertaining things. D'Israeli seems to be a person of much reading, particularly in French, Italian, and English. Religion he appears to have none; and his moral principles I fear are very loose: some of his sentiments are directly opposed to Christianity.

"1816, 4th month.

*"The Life of Arthur Wellesley.*

"Notwithstanding the incense of adulation which is plentifully offered in this work, it is evident that Lord Wellington must possess a great military genius. Looking at heroism in that light in which it is commonly surveyed, I should join my voice with the exulting millions. But, feeling a strong conviction of the unlawfulness of warring with 'carnal weapons,' I dare not follow in the triumphal procession, nor use the language of applause to the desolators of families and kingdoms. The volume contains some very mournful passages from the private journals of officers who were in some of the severest actions."

At the beginning of the year 1815, he commenced a sort of Diary, in which the events of his life are recorded with much characteristic simplicity and originality: this Journal contains an account of the books which he read, the visits which he received and paid, and sometimes the substance of the letters which he wrote, and of the conversations in which he bore a part. The following short extracts will serve to show the nature of it.

*“ Penketh, January 26th, 1815.*

“ This being the anniversary of my twenty-first year, and not having it in my power to distinguish it by the usual signs of feasting and convivial entertainment, I shall endeavour to pursue the plan which Lord Bacon recommends, viz., to make out an inventory of ideas, and of all intellectual goods and possessions; I conceive it to be a useful exercise for such as wish to improve by living; and as I do not reckon myself amongst the most drivelling part of my species, I may one day have the pleasure to witness the progress I have made in useful knowledge. Should this meet the eye of any besides the writer, they may perhaps smile at the pedantic air which it carries, but let them recollect, at the same time, that an impartial history of any one day of their own peregrinations, might appear equally ridiculous; the mind receives its sensations in an abrupt and incoherent manner, but as thought is a secret, as well as a silent operation, we can only be apprized of our *own* aberrations.

“ As reading is one of the grand means of acquiring knowledge, I may first notice in what departments of literature mine has lain.

*[Here follows, in the original, an account of books perused ; being in all about 460 volumes, including 16 volumes in French.]*

“ Lord Bacon says, youth ought to travel, and read men as well as books ; my travels however, have been sufficiently contracted in their plan, as I have seen but few places.”

“ *Sunday, October 8th, 1815.*—A truly interesting day, such as I have spent few in my life ; nothing new distinguished it till near the time that the meeting ended, when — —, with his two boys, came in ; I felt little love towards him, but invited him home with me, where he stayed dinner and tea. Our discussion of religious and metaphysical questions, was uninterrupted for five hours ; with this was included some desultory talk on miscellaneous subjects, some critical remarks on the origin of language &c., and a sort of lecture on the solar system. — — is verging rapidly towards deism ; nay, I should have said, universal scepticism ; he is a shrewd, unaccountable sort of man : I can come to no conclusion concerning him. Had he received an education, he might have been a Spinoza, a Hobbes, or a Paine. It would be useless as well as impossible, to preserve any thing like an adequate idea of our multifarious converse.”

“ *Monday, Oct. 16, 1815.*—Attended an annual meeting of the Warrington Auxiliary Bible Society. I have anticipated this day’s enjoyment with the most lively emotions, nor am I disappointed. The meeting consisted of about three hundred persons : amongst the speakers were the secretaries Hughes and Steinkopff, Dr. Adam Clarke, the poet Montgomery, &c. &c.”

In the spring of 1815, his school attained its greatest magnitude: he had, at that period, fifty-six scholars during the day, and he taught in the evening a number of pupils of more advanced age. The evening school he was soon obliged to relinquish, finding the very close confinement injurious to his health; and symptoms of returning lameness also began to appear. Still engaged with his studies, and the concerns of his school, he wrote but few letters. From amongst them the following are selected.

*To M. A.*

*"Penketh, June 6th, 1815.*

"----- The business of education, indeed, is so complicated in its relations, and so tardy in its process, that nothing but the most unremitted exertion can ensure its proper execution. It were to be wished that more enlightened notions on this subject generally prevailed; I mean as regards the importance and infinite value of learning.

"When to furnish the mind with useful ideas and virtuous principles, will be considered of greater moment than the attainment of riches or personal aggrandisement—then, and not until then, may the instructors of youth hope for liberal encouragement.

"Those who smoothe the way to the entrance of the temple of literature, seldom enjoy its triumphs, or partake largely of its rewards. More than civic honours are due to him who has turned the barren wilderness of a single human intellect into a fruitful field.

*"W. T."*



To G. C.

*“ Penketh, July 8th, 1815.*

“ Removed far from the hurry and business of the great world, there are few variations in the even tenor of my life; few occurrences of peculiar interest come across my way. Books of one description or other, serve for both study and recreation, and as my greatest excursion consists in passing from one book to another, I have nothing new to describe, except an occasional discovery in the regions of intellect, or the results of an attack on some difficult branch of science. I often have to curb my imagination, in fancying the benefits that would accrue, from a more enlarged acquaintance with mankind; and from the pleasure I should derive, from an actual inspection of those curiosities of art and nature, now only known to me through the medium of reading. At the same time, I am satisfied with my allotment, and am sensible that whilst it renders me liable to few dangers and disappointments, it is perhaps most conducive to my solid growth in every needful, natural, or spiritual acquirement.

“ The secret of being always satisfied, always resigned, is what I anxiously covet; it is an attainment perfectly compatible with the most active disposition, and the most unremitted attention to duty. But as it is one of the higher rewards, which Virtue confers on her disciples, it is but seldom we find ourselves sufficiently humble to deserve it. Christ has promised to come and make his abode with us; but this gracious promise is only fulfilled, on condition that we banish every other guest. Oh! that this was

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constantly my happy experience, and that of those dear to my affections!

“That beautiful simile of the enjoyment of peace flowing as a river, has always commanded my admiration; but the actual attainment of it demands greater requisitions and greater self-denial, than has hitherto been the sacrifice of my stubborn heart. Sometimes, when deploring the slow progress I appear to make, my attention has been strongly called to pursuits of a literary kind, and an anxious wish has arisen, that too ardent a thirst for, and too constant an employment in, treasuring up the materials of learning, might not obscure that evidence for truth which has been mercifully afforded to me. Notwithstanding, I am persuaded that a tender conscience, and a studious mind, are compatible with true religion; with this difference however, that it will cause all our studies to verge as to one common centre, and a reference in all things to the glory of God, will take the place of vanity and inflation.

“I lately read a small volume of Essays on the Nature of the Passions, &c. by David Hume. I found them very alluring, by their exceeding elegance of diction, and highly polished style, and they also contain many pertinent classical allusions and correct sentiments: yet their general tendency verges rapidly towards complete scepticism, and after having insidiously undermined the fair fabric of Christianity, they leave no other asylum for the wretched and tried, among the sons and daughters of mortality. As far as I have seen of the philosophical works of Hume, I do not know a more dangerous writer; he was well acquainted with the principal labyrinths of the human heart, and had narrowly

watched the developement and connexion of the passions: yet it was his misfortune to get entangled in attempting to solve the mysteries of religion by the same process of reasoning with which we examine things belonging to the material world: and all his refinement of manner is not sufficient to expiate for the perplexity and doubt in which he leaves the minds of his readers. In every species of knowledge, it is much easier to puzzle than instruct, to start a controversy, than to conduct it with ability. This method, so unfavourable to the common stock of intellect, has been much practised by writers on theology, particularly since the French revolution, which event has not less influenced the opinions and creeds, than the political state of Europe. Thus we have had ephemeral productions without number, on the most sacred doctrines of Christianity, and writings of various constructions calculated to mislead, from the universal pyrrhonism of Bayle, to the scurrility and abuse of Paine, and the Abbé Barruel.

“Indeed, such is the corrupt taste prevalent amongst all ranks, that all good men have need to throw their full weight into the scale of Virtue, and discountenance by every means in their power, the growth and influence of error. Those who are embarking on the wide sea of human opinions, flushed with the expectations of youth, and unsuspecting of danger, have great need to be advised which are the books that will accelerate or retard their progress to truth. Such a variety of cases may occur from peculiarity of temperament, or situation in life, that no general rule can be admitted for regulating the exact standard or quantity of literary food. The same

sacred light which discovers moral evil, will also, if attended to, point out the thorny mazes of error: it will not only shine on our path, but discover the hidden snares on the right hand and on the left: thus we are constituted the guardians of our own minds; a trust how sacred! That spark of the Divinity, which it is the business of education to cultivate and restrain; becomes our own in attaining to manhood, and it is our imperious duty to aim at progressive improvement. There is no point at which we can stop: I have often compared education to a mathematical line, of which we see the beginning, but which is produced onwards to eternity.

“W. T.”

*To R. O.*

“August 16th, 1815.

“----- The ardent lover of mankind will not desire an extension of the science of geography for the mere gratification of curiosity; he will perceive that in the grand scheme of Providence, the remotest things may be connected with the eternal interests of man, and be made subservient to the advancement of his felicity. To England we owe the exulting idea, that the double blessing of natural and religious knowledge is making its way into the hut of the remotest savage, and that the precise site of a mountain, or the course of a river, is ascertained for the purpose of furthering the spread of evangelical truth.

“----- If the different powers in Europe had been as eager for the last twenty years to promote peace on earth and good-will to men, as they have to encourage the reign of universal discord, the most astonishing results might have

been expected. But whilst we have to lament that the lust of ambition and desire of conquest are the predominating passions, it is grateful to observe the silent progress of civil and religious light, leading, as we are taught to anticipate, to a two-fold emancipation of the human race.

“----- But, oh! I feel desirous that our increase in virtue may keep pace with our other attainments, and that those talents which are given us for a wise purpose, may not *once* be debased by an employment on unprofitable subjects. I have wished that our friendship might tend to accelerate our progress in the best of things, and that this will finally be its result. I have no doubt so long as we dwell under the guidance of the Almighty.

“W. T.”

*To his young Sister.*

“Oct. 3, 1815.

“I often feel anxious on thy account, when I see any one improving rapidly in learning: but I hope thou strivest to be contented in thy present situation. If Providence should see meet to afford thee a better opportunity of attaining those accomplishments due to thy native good sense, it will ever be one of my chief pleasures to afford thee assistance. Some qualifications are even now in thy power to cultivate; piety, filial affection, modesty, and industry. Need I enlarge on their value, or recommend them to thy serious consideration and practice? These are not professedly taught in schools, though their importance far exceeds all other learning. We should be better able to dispense with *writing, arithmetic*, or any other branch of science, than with these amiable qualities of the heart.

which form the cementing bond of society, whether savage or refined.

“W. T.”

*To J. A. B.*

“I desire to return thanks to the Divine Being, that He has preserved in my mind to this day a relish for the pleasures of the understanding. Whilst so much pains is taken in this dissolute age, to glut the senses with enjoyment, I do often feel it matter of gratitude, that my aims were early directed to a higher source, and that at the period of life when the avenues to vice are most numerous, Religion, with her handmaid Science, allured me to their peaceful abodes. Here I have been favoured, not indeed with an undisturbed tranquillity, but with such a portion of quiet as might be expected from the trials incident to humanity, and that strict vigilance necessary to keep in order passions not wholly subdued.

“Uninterrupted happiness in this life seems to have formed no part of the plan of Providence; and that man who fancies it attainable, experience will soon convince of his error; yet it is obvious, that most of our regrets and sorrows are of our own making; and it is probable, that if we were to labour as assiduously to overcome moral evil, as we do in the accumulation of knowledge, an improvement would be witnessed, and its concomitant peace would be the inmate of our bosoms. Far, however, as the intellectual treasures amassed by some, are from adorning our holy religion, it was evidently meant, that our minds should be informed as well as regulated.

“The acquisition of knowledge is in itself an

imperious duty; yet the Almighty graciously confers on the performer of this duty, so many innocent gratifications, that eventually, what was a forced, becomes a voluntary act, and duty and inclination go hand in hand. Many and fragrant are the flowers strewn in this path; but unless the mind be delicately alive to virtuous emotions, the flowers will be passed unheeded, and their fragrance be unperceived. For want of this sharpened perception, how small is the improvement, though the number of readers is great. Indeed, whether we read books, or men, or the great volume of nature, the same results follow from a negligent or an indolent perusal.

“In the visible creation of God, it is strikingly obvious, how few suffer the most sublime phenomena to arrest their notice. The most signal displays of divine power and skill, are seen by many with listless apathy; even the harmony of a system is considered by their grovelling minds with no more attention than they would bestow on the commonest piece of mechanism.

“It is but of late that I have sensibly felt the want of a classical education. The motley volumes which chance threw in my way, have indeed been read with avidity, but the harvest I fear is barren and fruitless. That illogical and desultory course of reading which too many adopt, and with which I am afraid I stand chargeable, answers no other end than to rob us of our precious time, for which it confers no equivalent. It is taking a circular instead of a direct road to knowledge. Extensive tracts seem to be traversed, when in fact no progress is made. In the course of the journey, too, such a variety of objects present themselves, that they enter the mind in utter confusion.

“Taste is seldom found wholly inherent; at least, without proper and timely cultivation, it lies latent and unseen, like ‘the statue in a block of marble.’

“The most perfect models of excellence ought to be incessantly held up to youth. The memory of the ingenious youth is retentive, and his curiosity ardent; it is therefore the most proper season for acquiring languages. If the opportunity be suffered to escape, he will have entered on the great stage of life, and will seldom have leisure to pursue studies foreign to the performance of his part. But should he possess both leisure and inclination, how hardly will he be induced to pass the vestibule of learning, when he ought to be reposing in its sanctuary. It is the summit of the hill of science, to which his ambitious views are directed, while before the gate of languages, the only safe and sure passage, he sits down in a despair, which terminates in disgust. That literary enthusiast J. J. Rousseau, amongst other erroneous schemes, proposes not to meddle with scholastic acquirement till the age of ten or twelve years; but the Spartan king would have told him, boys ought to be learning ‘such things as they were to know and practise when they became men.’ Time is too valuable, and life too short, to waste in generalities: the mind is to be early inured to labour, and taught by short and vigorous sallies, to make those conquests, which are to form the crown of its maturer years.

“The important business of education ought to commence with the first dawn of reason. Not that I would recommend too premature an initiation into the tedious branches of learning; but it would at least be desirable, that on the first intro-



duction of children into our company, we should accustom them to hear good sense, instead of being an echo to the jargon of the nursery, and helping to ground them in the most absurd superstition. Well might a certain Roman emperor return thanks that he had had an excellent tutor, and had found the like blessing for his children. When we consider the difficulty of the task, and the incompetency of most men to its proper execution, it may indeed be pronounced a capital blessing.

“ W. T.”

*To his young Brother.*

“ Penketh, Nov. 15th, 1815.

“ - - - - - Thine is a period of life when the mind, as yet unfurnished with ideas, is but too easily impressed with the tone of surrounding objects ; whatever wears the charms of novelty and pleasure is eagerly pursued by the unsuspecting youth : the tempers, the habits, and the dispositions of those with whom he associates, are frequently copied, and the morning of his days, which he ought, like holy Samuel, to dedicate to his God, is often made the introduction to vice, and the commencement of irretrievable ruin.

“ To prevent so awful a termination, it will be necessary for thee to begin life well. Endeavour with all thy might to practise every virtue. Shun the very appearance of vice. A two-fold curse attends the wicked ; miserable in this world, they will also experience eternal misery in that which is to come. Neither illustrious rank, nor splendid abilities are sufficient to quiet the gnawings of a wounded conscience, nor lessen the horrors of a guilty soul. So heinous is sin in the sight of

a pure and all-seeing God, that the most terrible vengeance has been repeatedly denounced against it. If we were to offend a king or an emperor, we should expect some marks of displeasure to follow, how much less then can we hope to pass unpunished if we offend the Majesty of Heaven! Nay, we cannot escape, for a book of record is kept, and Christ himself has assured us we must stand before his throne to receive rewards or punishments according to the deeds done in the body.

“The Holy Scriptures contain the most ample proofs of the Almighty’s hatred to sin. Adam and Eve for their disobedience were expelled the garden of Eden with a flaming sword: and no sooner were the inhabitants of the earth overrun with corruption and wickedness, than there was sent a great flood which swept them away.

“----- The coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was the most important event which ever happened since the creation of the world. To this sublime event all the typical rites and ceremonies of the Jews had a direct reference. To this they were constantly directed to look by their priests, prophets, and patriarchs, as to a time when the Messiah would set up his kingdom on earth, and establish universal concord amongst men. But, alas! they mistook the meaning of the prophecies. It was an outward kingdom which they looked for, and the glittering pomp of an earthly throne. Hence they were disappointed, and refused to believe in Christ, who declared: ‘My kingdom is not of this world,’ and who sought no throne but the hearts of his disciples.

“The ignorant Jews hoped to have been led by Him, to triumph over their enemies, and to

establish on the ruins of other nations a universal monarchy. But for no such purpose was he sent. He came to heal the broken-hearted; to reclaim the wandering penitent; to do good to the souls and bodies of men; and to purchase by his precious blood those mansions of glory which are prepared for such as do his will. For these divine, benevolent purposes did he quit his throne of inaccessible light, and clothe himself with humanity. No worldly views, no aspiring after riches or aggrandizement marked his precepts; on the contrary, he embraced a voluntary poverty, and left costly apparel and soft raiment to the voluptuary. He sought no distinction but what resulted from his superior virtue, and cheerfully led the way for his humble followers from sorrow to rejoicing, and from a cruel martyrdom to a crown of immortal glory.

“What a felicity must it have been to have seen and conversed with our blessed Redeemer, to have gazed on his placid heavenly countenance, or sat, like one of old, at his feet, silently imbibing the dew of his heavenly instruction. We have not, it is true, this enviable privilege, but we have that precious book, the New Testament, in our possession—a book which contains more pure morality, and more sublime doctrines than any other extant—the only book which teaches us to love our enemies, to do good to them that hate us, and pray for those that despitefully use us.

“W. T.”

*To R. O.*

“*Penketh.*”

\* I hope we shall each of us be preserved in the principles and practice of virtue, that there may be an increasing bond of union between us.

Many other sources of friendship there are, but they are polluted and will gradually sink into oblivion. This is the only durable basis, and on it a superstructure may be raised, which will survive the wreck of time.

"I thank God that religious impressions were not only early but deeply laid in my mind. These feelings have of late been awakened with peculiar force: I have been led as in days past to consider the few moments of my existence as an almost undistinguishable point in the boundless void of eternity. What room then, I have cried, is there for wasting one of those precious moments in trifling pursuits. Shall we abridge that period which is already too short to allow us to fill up those innumerable duties, which, as reasonable creatures, devolve upon us? My determination at present is to engage in no studies which do not enlarge my sphere of usefulness, and to associate only with such men and books, as may tend to my improvement in true wisdom.

"W. T."

The school vacation at the end of the year 1815, was spent partly with his parents at Lowton, and partly on a visit to a friend at Liverpool. Whilst at the latter place his mind received some peculiarly forcible religious impressions, which appear to have produced in him an increased seriousness. He alludes to this in some of the following letters.

*To ---*

*Penketh, January 10th, 1816.*

"In the fluctuating state of earthly friendships which have for their basis self love, and hypocrisy and deceit for a bond of union, there

is nothing to desire, nothing worth wishing for. But when friendship is founded upon the love of truth, when the bonds of a fraternal affection are sanctified by the true principles of christianity, when the good of our neighbour is preferred to our own, is there not reason to believe that Providence will preserve this friendship, that he will incline our hearts to serve Him with fidelity, and to love one another with more tenderness and affection?

“----- The English language, in my opinion, possesses that happy flexibility which qualifies it as a medium for the grave, or the gay; for the dry axioms of metaphysical research, or the most glowing and vivid colours of poetical imagination. Strength and copiousness are its characteristics, and in some instances, it is thought inferior in elegance to the Greek and Roman tongues, the simplicity of its grammar, and the energetic force of its idioms, together with the vast *copia verborum* it contains, may be deemed fully equivalent. If to admit varieties of style be an essential requisite, where shall we find a wider contrast, than the sententious brevity of Swift, and the diffusive elegance of Shaftesbury? If a resemblance between the sound and the sense, contribute to the perfection of a language, numbers of English words will be found to possess this astonishing analogy.

“But whilst indulging this panegyric, I feel strongly reminded that all existing languages are but so many mementos of human folly and ambition; and that whether employed as vehicles for the dissemination of religious knowledge, or the advancement of natural science, care should be taken, that sense is not sacrificed.

to sound, and that the awful form of truth be not bowed to the intricacies of style, or made to serve the ostensible purposes of criticism. The enquiry with me, is not so much what niceties of arrangement a language is capable of, as who are the men of acknowledged probity, virtue, and ability, who have written in it? Minds of the first order cultivate the language of the nation in which Providence gave them birth, and whatever may be its natural defects, generally succeed in transfusing into the souls of others, their own superior energies.

“ The power of rhetoric, when properly addressed to both the understanding and the passions, is so universal, that all nations concur in decreeing eminence to the man who possesses the talent of extemporaneous eloquence. The ancients ranked no qualification with this rare one; nor can the impetus communicated in their popular assemblies be ascribed to any other cause but the rapid, vehement, effusions of oratory. I conceive, however, that in the infancy of this art amongst the early Greeks, it must have existed in a similar form to that which now obtains among the savage Indians. Sentiments wrought up to the highest enthusiasm, extravagant hyperbole and violent gesticulation were substituted for that mild tone of ratiocination which a more polished state of society requires.

“ ----- Still a love of reason bids me hesitate in exchanging sound argument for flimsy declamation. Perhaps, when we compare the state of our physical knowledge with that of the ancients, and consider that the glorious light of the gospel has dispelled those crude, visionary notions, which floated in the minds of the Roman

populace, we shall be less surprised at the sober air which modern rhetoric has assumed. The Heathen, however dignified in other respects, had not the cheering light of revelation: hence the absurd notion of a cosmogony, in which his deities possessed human passions. The transition to the deification of heroes, living or dead, was easy; and to this imaginary deification, we may impute part of the enthusiasm created by their popular harangues. Happily for us, we live in times when the nature of man, and the relation he holds with his maker, are more distinctly ascertained; when the politician or the preacher is only acknowledged as a delegate, and is known to have some of the infirmities common to mankind.

“----- The greater our watchfulness and integrity of heart, the brighter and more active is the state of our mental faculties. I have sometimes experienced this in a remarkable manner; and I am convinced, the natural and experimental philosopher would derive very important aid from the belief, that inward peace with God qualifies to attain to a more intimate knowledge of the outward and visible creation. Robert Hall, in one of his sermons, has said of religion, that ‘Passions pure and calm, with habitual serenity, the full enjoyment of life, undisturbed by the dread of dissolution, or the fear of an hereafter, are its invaluable gifts.’ They are truly invaluable; nor can we ever be sufficiently grateful, if amidst the alluring baits of time and sense, the distraction of business, and the difficulties peculiar to our station, we are preserved in a quiet, contented, thankful frame; when we are able to stand amidst internal and external storms, the objects of the blessed promise, ‘Thou wilt keep

him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.

“There is a sort of honesty of heart relating to small, and apparently indifferent matters, too little known, I fear, amongst Christian candidates. This mortification of the will in trifling, or what the apostle terms, lawful things, is indeed rarely heard of; while it is certain, it constitutes a principal and leading feature of that religion, whose blessed Founder himself gave the example.

“----- I never read Mosheim: his learning I am informed, is unquestionable; his veracity not equally so. Joseph Gurney Bevan refutes his misrepresentation of Friends and their principles. I feel curious to know what Mosheim says of the Ebionites, Nazarenes, Gnostics, and other early heretics and heresiarchs, as there is much said respecting them in Doctor Horsley's able and spirited controversy with the great Unitarian champion, Doctor Priestley. Few men besides Dr. Horsley had the learning and acuteness necessary to defeat so able an antagonist; and though the stiffness and authoritative tone of the prelate are sometimes discernible, Dr. Horsley may be considered as having very effectually served our common cause. The admirers of Dr. Priestley ought to know, that his general credit as a faithful ecclesiastical historian and interpreter of the early fathers, is quite set aside by the wilful perversions cited by the Archdeacon of St. Albans. In his investigations into the properties of matter, we may allow the extent of Dr. Priestley's learning to have been very great, but does it follow that he was therefore fit to explain the oracles of God? Oh! the harm that has resulted from the use of unsanctified learning!



“----- I have often desired and believed, that God would draw thee to a nearer, and more intimate contemplation of His Divine perfections, and would say, as his angel said in the apocalyptic visions: ‘Come up higher [hither].’ I am sensible of the very humiliating feeling which must have attended an obedience to the command. But herein is the amazing condescension of the Redeemer manifested; that dust and ashes, nay *sinful* dust and ashes, are permitted to stand in his presence, and made an instrument in furthering his kingdom on earth.

“W. T.”

*To — —*

“The intelligence I had of the death of thy dear husband was very afflicting; that of thy dear son not equally so, as I was encouraged to hope his removal would be from suffering to rejoicing, a release from the pain of disease, and the danger of youthful temptations. Hard indeed it must have been, to receive without murmuring, these deep and awful trials. I have endeavoured to impart what poor counsel was with me to give, when I have recollected, that the consolations of the Lord were neither few nor small; that he was the God of David, of Daniel, of Jonah; that great peace was the portion of those who kept his statutes, and that, didst thou look to Him in true simplicity of heart, he would fortify thee with patience, and confer a healing virtue even on the cup of bitterness.

“Oh! for stronger and more perfect faith, to believe that His ways are true and righteous; that His appointments are just and merciful; and that all things, however unpromising in appearance, shall work together for good to them that

love God. It is this humble, thankful frame of mind, and this alone, that can tinge with brightness the darkest clouds; nay, it can, for a moment, rend away the gloomy veil of poverty, trials, and afflictions, and reveal the transporting prospect of an eternity of bliss. I am anxious for thee, as time continues its silent progress, and as thy maternal solitudes, in rearing a numerous family increase, that thy spiritual strength and needful attainments may increase also. I covet for thee, with myself, that humility and lowliness of heart may adorn the inner man, looking to our great pattern, and conforming our lives in all things, to the light He has graciously bestowed.

“It is a great and solemn exercise to walk at all times uprightly, secretly to practise self-denial, and through faithfulness, to become a pillar in Zion, an honourable stone in the temple of the Holy One; and this I believe is the Lord’s will concerning us; nor am I without hopes, that we shall be enabled to walk worthy of our high calling, and to make our election sure.

I trust that ere I see thee I shall become a member of the Society. It seems as if nothing less would complete the peace I have for some time been favoured with. And in the concern I feel on this subject, thy advice is feelingly brought to my remembrance: want of opportunity prevents me from enlarging. I have a tolerably full school, which, together with a studious mind in an infirm body, leaves me but little leisure.

“W. T.”

To — —

*“ Penketh, 3d mo. 2d. 1816.*

“ The calm state of the political world, and any almost total seclusion from the flowery paths of literature, would scarcely leave me a topic to write on, if there were not certain points of resemblance in the human mind, certain sentiments endeared by their importance, which, independent of rank or profession, employ the contemplative moments of all men. The great ocean of truth laying before us, we can surely never want a subject for discussion: for vast as this ocean is, we may safely embark, taking the compass of right reason, and the telescope of revelation, as our assistants.

“ Without this blessed medium of vision, all is wrapped in mist and uncertainty. Vain were the attempt, though gifted with every natural talent, to pierce with the eye of reason, those interminable regions of joy or despair beyond the grave. The Stagyrte Philosopher, was perhaps equal to any mortal in intellectual vigour, yet how obscure were his notions on the nature and attributes of the Divine Being! Socrates was a model of prudence, wisdom, and moral rectitude, but he, too, doubted as the close of his earthly probation drew near. Blessed revelation! which dispels alike, crude conjectures, and melancholy anticipations! which gives patience in suffering here, and points to an unspeakable, endless bliss hereafter! Blessed revelation! which openeth a way for the simple, believing soul, to attain to a present, and everlasting salvation. Great indeed, was the condescension of Infinite Goodness, who manifested His glory to the patriarchs and prophets of old, stooping to their understandings by

many striking emblems in communicating His will to mankind.

“The law, with its symbolical rites and figures formed an admirable introduction to the liberal spirit of the gospel. The ceremonies enjoined, having performed a two-fold office, in convincing many of their inefficacy, as to sprinkling the conscience from dead works, and in having preserved the royal line of David, from mixture with impure, idolatrous nations; all things being ready, in the fulness of time was ushered in the Divine Majesty of the Messiah.

“There results to me a delightful exultation, from meditating on the outward advent of our common Saviour. The love, the mercy, the condescension of the Deity, are here displayed in the highest degree; and from the joy evinced by the angelic host, in their annunciation to the shepherds, there is reason to believe, it was a moment of universal triumph throughout the hierarchies of heaven. What feelings must have been those of Simeon, who, praying daily for the appearance of the consolation of Israel, at length embraced the holy child Jesus? His fears dispersed, his trembling hopes realized, he had been spared to see the commencement of the reign of grace, of that kingdom, whose continuance and prosperity his prophetic vision would desery, whilst its extent would appear illimitable, and its duration without end.

“All the watchings of an anxious pilgrimage were repaid: ‘Lord, now lettest thou thy servnt depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.’ Such was the testimony of one who had witnessed the outward appearance of Christ; how much more lively ought to be our own, who may become the blessed subjects of his inward

and spiritual appearance in the heart! For I do believe, (how short soever we may be in attainment) that this is the day of his promise, and that the influence of his Holy Spirit is even now ready to sanctify and cleanse us from all sin. O dear friend! I have had deep exercises since I saw thee, a searching as of the inmost parts. It was the second evening of my visit to Liverpool that a solemn weight and inquiry came over me, and the cry of my soul was, to learn my real state and situation. There seemed a want of sight as well as humility. To thee, who hast experienced the boundless extent of redeeming love, I need not observe, that the result was solid peace. I had anticipated the many amusing hours I should spend in the Athenæum: the great room in Marble-street, and other public exhibitions had had their share in the account: but such a solemn stillness and internal calm did I enjoy during the rest of my visit, that I durst not give any interruption, by partaking of superfluous amusements. I felt however, freedom to search out the rare and the curious in T. T.'s collection of books.

“No moments are so sweet to me, so full of existence, as those quick and full recollections of the nature, end, and dignity of man; of the rapidity of time, and the immeasurable length of eternity; of the unspeakable glory of the Creator, and his adorable mercy and goodness to his creatures. Such seasons are really like the prospect from Mount Pisgah, when we can suddenly leave earth, with its anxious cares, and fixing our view on the land of our inheritance, realize by a lively faith its present possession.

“Yet I believe that a depending, suffering state contributes to mental health, and a daily

exercise in the cross. Oh! it is a great thing to know our wills subjected to the Lord's will, to possess the two-fold qualification of serpentine wisdom with dove-like innocency. Great indeed is the mystery of Godliness. God made manifest in the flesh, once offered up for the sins of all, and now visiting by his Holy Spirit, the souls of all those who love his appearance.

"W. T."

*To J. R.*

*"Penketh, 21st 3d mo. 1816.*

"It is astonishing, how many busy principles of action there are at work in society, all of which are effecting what must be undone again with sorrow. What anxious moments are spent in bedizening the body, whilst the amiable qualities of the mind remain uncultivated and waste! What running to playhouses, to dinners, to levees, to watering places! Here is one out of breath with pursuing popular applause; another brooding with delight over an empty title just conferred on him. In short, the greatest diligence is used by many thousands, to accelerate their descent in the broad way that leadeth to destruction: broad as it is, there is scarcely room for the croud of infatuated votaries, who, unconcernedly fill its passage, and apparently sink to rise no more. But dost thou see on yonder plain covered with brambles, a solitary path, so narrow as to be barely discernible? A few people of both sexes, animated by a belief of its glorious termination, are carefully endeavouring to keep the rectilinear direction of the road: they seem to be mostly weeping, not that they are either discontented, or afraid of the ravenous beasts which incessantly

howl on either side, but their hearts are penetrated and broken, with a sense of their Redeemer's love, and of the adorable condescension which every moment sustains and preserves them. With these tried, self-denying few, my soul hath unity; with those, who, through great tribulation, have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, I bless God, I feel a near and dear unity. Oh, my dear friend, the heart-searching power which I have felt this winter! it has been as a probe to the very inmost reins.

"I was for some time insensible what was doing in me, though I felt constrained to use daily a very solemn pause, previous to dismissing the scholars, and was often led into deep and profitable meditations on time, heaven, eternity, &c. Christmas I looked forward to with peculiar pleasure, as I intended to accept an invitation to spend a week with T. T. of Liverpool. Thou art not unacquainted with the literary gratifications which that town affords, as the Athenæum, debating society, botanic garden, &c. and of these I had formed large anticipations. But it was mercifully ordered, that my enjoyments were of a higher nature, and my peace established on a firmer foundation. I arrived in Liverpool after several curious occurrences, on a seventh day evening, and retained my usual spirits till late on second day night; when, retiring to bed, I was seized with such a solemn sense of the Divine presence and my own unworthiness, as I never before knew. Give me humility and lowliness of heart, was my incessant cry. All other wishes and inclinations were taken away; it was the whole desire of my soul, and great indeed was the self-abasedness which was mercifully given. Oh, the watchfulness, the peace, the solid en-

joyment I tasted during the remainder of that week! I sat under the vine, and its fruit was sweet to my taste: I could say with Peter, Lord, thou knowest I love thee. Nor have I yet lost, (through unutterable mercy,) this blessed experience: my heart is daily dissolved at the sight of infinite goodness, and every meeting is as the refreshings of the former and the latter rain. How forcibly have the days of my first visitation been revived to my recollection, when, about the age of fourteen, I mingled my drink with tears, and looked for the salvation of the Lord, more than for the morning light! And in this state of fear and watchfulness, I have felt a tenderness in regard to preserving the testimony borne by ancient friends in dress, language, &c. which things thou wilt recollect I had deviated from. And it has been brought before me in much weightiness of spirit, with respect to the propriety of applying for a nearer union with Friends; but not seeing my way clear enough in this particular, I wish to wait for further counsel.

“Oh! my dear friend, the sweetness that results from a daily and hourly self-denial! from a yielding up without any secret reservation to the hand of the refiner! His will, I believe, is nothing less than our sanctification, body, soul, and spirit, and a purity and simplicity in the inmost thoughts. And respecting knowledge, I have seen clearly, that that kind is most to be desired, which conduceth to moral rectitude, and which, laying open the frailty and weakness of humanity, teacheth us where to apply for strength; a knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation. But a knowledge of the sciences, and physical operations of the material world, when un-



soned by grace, is similar in nature, (though inferior in degree) to that which the devils possess, for they may be supposed to far exceed us in understanding the occult causes of things; but as it is merely knowledge, unmixed with a spark of goodness, they are not thereby rendered the less miserable. Yet a life of self-denial, and inward communion with God, does not preclude a proper and reasonable investigation of His works; on the contrary, it stimulates to a search and admiration of every thing which bears the stamp of a divine hand, and to such a soul, the print of His footsteps is perpetually discoverable.

“W. T.”

*To R. O.*

“*Penketh, 4th mo. 18, 1816.*

“----- Who can tell, amidst the blaze of intellect which has distinguished the commencement of the nineteenth century, if scruples may not arise and multiply on the unchristian, immoral, inhuman tendency, of war? Very many, I am persuaded, in various congregations, are already convinced of it, but are kept in a kind of lukewarm, indifferent state, concerning the matter, owing, it is to be feared, to the avowed approbation given it by their teachers.. What then is to be done? While the ‘prince of the power of the air’ reigns ascendant, we can only repeat, in the spirit of meekness and hope, ‘Thy kingdom come!’ We can only hope (which is not impossible) that pre-disposing causes, in the hand of Providence, may effect such a universal change and revolution in the minds of men, as may finally extirpate the root of bitterness, and

the tree designed for the healing of the nations; may flourish in its stead.

“Oh! that we may individually approach a nearer conformity to that Divine Person, who has set the example of meekness, forgiveness, and love, to his followers!

“— —’s very sudden removal is an awful memento, which I earnestly wish may be improved by survivors. It has been remarked, that every thing in nature has a warning voice, which indeed is the case to a reflecting mind. But when death actually makes his visits, and with relentless hand separates beloved relations or dear friends, the subject then assumes a tangible shape; we feel as if a slender thread was all that connected us with time. As if, tottering on the brink of a precipice, the most trifling casualty might serve to force us into the abyss of eternity. Amongst the enigmas which perplex the studier of Human Nature, perhaps none is more strange than the inaptitude we feel towards the contemplation of a future state. Immersed in the cares, the pleasures, and follies of present existence, thousands, nay millions, sail tranquilly down the stream of life, without the knowledge of any destined port; the haven of rest and bliss has rarely occupied their thoughts for a moment; and unless snatched from perdition by a miracle of grace, they sink to rise no more.

“Can we ever, amidst this devastating prospect, sufficiently prize our privileges? Possessing a love, an ardent love of literature, we have been guided through its manifold snares, and taught its relative value and dependence on *truth*. Impressed with awfully sublime views of the nature and attributes of the Deity, the imperfection of man, and the immeasurable

length of that eternity to which he is swiftly hastening, we have been induced, I hope, to endeavour after that purity of heart, which may give boldness in the hour of trial, and confidence at the day of judgment. A wondrous admiration of the richness and extent of the Divine Mercy, will, I am persuaded, form part of the employment of glorified spirits; as it so often excites a mixture of rejoicing and astonishment in those who are yet toiling in the wilderness of this world.

“W. T.”

*To — C.*

*5th month 20th, 1816.*

“----- In the great mass of society we perceive various degrees of union to exist between individuals. The interests of commerce, the compacts of social life, and the pursuits of artists and literary men are the causes of the most common; but in my opinion there can be no permanent assimilation of soul, which has not religion for its foundation.

“It is true the frivolity of some, and the false sentimentality of others, continually display the enjoyment of an apparent happiness in their connections; but on meeting the chilling blasts of adversity or death, the film mostly disappears, and they are left friendless and comfortless to meet the storm. Pride has its resources, genius its firmness, and the worst passions may be employed in resolutely braving the hour of danger: but religion alone can inspire that fortitude which has humility for its basis, which takes away fear, not by apathy or presumption, but by revealing superior love and superior consolations.

“I am perhaps more led into these remarks

from having just taken a last farewell of a dear and honoured friend, who is in the last stage of a consumption; unable to articulate, with what fervour did he press my hand, and with an expressiveness of manner which I shall never forget! To him, I said, as I mournfully left the room, what is all that this world can afford? Beauty, wealth, knowledge, are alike unavailing; the ground is sliding from under his feet, and a few hours more will conduct him to eternity. What a satisfaction to reflect, that at such a moment, the consolations of religion are his! Under its divinely regulating influence, his life has been irreproachable; and I feel no doubt but his death will be glorious. Oh! if the proficients in the science of war, if the desolators of kingdoms, receive such pompous epithets, in what language ought we to speak of the christian, who, having spent a whole life in pursuits of active benevolence, is just laying down the toils of his warfare? His labours are at length terminated, his commission fulfilled, his doubts and fears swallowed up in the prospect of victory—a spectacle this, worthy of men and angels. May we ourselves realize it by a faithful perseverance in those steps of duty and self-denial, which can alone, through faith, give confidence in the hour of trial!

“What an era has the opening of the nineteenth century become! The abolition of that murderous traffic the Slave Trade; the formation of the Bible Society; the extension and increase of Missionary Societies; the national system of education for the poor; and talents, with splendid rank; employing their conjoined forces in the support of a thousand benevolent institutions, to the defeat of ignorance, and the alleviation of human woe.

\*Doubtless there are peculiar seasons and times, when the visitations of Divine Grace are more powerfully and universally acknowledged; may we not presume, from the signs of the times, that this is at least the commencement of such a period? A general bond of fraternity seems to prevail throughout the followers of Christ; and we already take by the right hand of fellowship, the converted Hindoo, the African, or the friendly Catholic, of which last there are many thousands on the continent. No one can so fully appreciate these signs as the christian who has proved the efficacy of divine truth in his own soul.

"----- Amongst those who have bid adieu to the debasing pleasures of sensuality, and have taken up their lot with the self-denying few, there are still many obstacles in the way to christian perfection. The refinement of literary pleasures, or the abstractions of mathematical research, will too often lower the standard of zeal, or cool the ardour of devotional feelings. Some are carried away with poetry, to others a metaphysical chain of reasoning offers a strong temptation. All, however, whose peculiar occupations compel them to lay in stores of scientific knowledge, experience the necessity of keeping humble, and employing the weapons of watchfulness and prayer. To the intelligent christian there is yet another source of disquiet—the doubts which his invaluable, but finite reasoning powers are ready enough to create, are too often confirmed by the many secret or open attacks constantly made on the blessed doctrine of revelation; they are to be met with in one shape or other in innumerable books. Oh! that I could here declare what my soul feels for thee; my anxious desire that thou mayest enjoy the peculiar care of

the great Head of the Church, Jesus Christ thy Redeemer. Cherish His precious name; let it lay near thy heart, and may the period never arrive, when, deluded by the false light of scepticism, thou art no longer anxious to be reckoned an integral part of his self-denying followers.

"With regard to the trying profession thou hast adopted, I can only venture to recommend to thy notice, with a reference to that sublime 'reason' which is at all times subservient to religion, the precept of an eminent heathen philosopher: *Si vis tibi omnia subjicere, te subice rationis. Multos reges, si ratio te rexerit: ab illa disces quid et quemadmodum aggredi debeas!*

"W. T."

To J. A.

"Penketh, 7th mo. 14th, 1816.

"However negligent I may have seemed, I do assure thee thou hast often been foremost in my thoughts, and my soul hath felt a degree of union with thee, in the overflowings of that love which is unspeakable. Though no advocate for the doctrine of final perseverance, yet I begin to think, that a soul which God hath once visited, will not easily be suffered to perish in its blood; my own private experience has furnished me with abundant proofs of the exceeding forbearance of our common Saviour. Nay, the mere restraint of punishment is not all; for frequently in the very height of ingratitude and disobedience, we are loaded with the most inestimable gifts of heaven, and, as it were, 'compelled to come in,' and taste of the marriage supper of the Lamb.

"The last winter and succeeding spring has

been with me a time of closer searching than I remember to have experienced at any former period, not excepting even my first conviction. I went to Liverpool during the vacation, expecting to have derived much pleasure from visiting libraries and other public buildings. But Oh! on the second evening of my arrival in that town, such a solemn, weighty sense of the Divine Presence came over me, accompanied with such a humiliating view of my own nothingness, that I was made willing to sit, as at the feet of the great Master and Teacher of souls. I returned home full of strength and faith, and was mercifully favoured with the enjoyment of a peaceful and grateful heart. I set out in the performance of the duties of the new year, with new resolutions, and with a strong reliance on my Saviour and Preserver.

“Though the above is not wholly applicable to my present state, yet I bless the Lord, I feel a daily sense of his care and love. Not having heard from thee for so long, I can only trust, that thou art preserved the same example of patience, meekness, humility, and brotherly love.

“W. T.”

Thus was he gradually refined and withdrawn from this world, and prepared for that change which he was now so soon to experience.

During the eight years that have passed in review, he was a diligent attender of the meetings of Friends; and although not yet an acknowledged member of the Society, he was in a great measure convinced of the truth of its doctrines, and in almost all things conformed to its practice; he had not yet applied for admission, and his most intimate friends forbore to urge it,

from a firm persuasion, that whenever he made the application, it would be the result of a clear conviction of the truth of the principles of the Society. This conviction appears to have been completed about this time. It will be seen by the next letter that the subject had dwelt closely upon his mind, and that he had become convinced of the propriety of the practice of the Society, in the only remaining particular upon which he hesitated, or in which he differed from them.

*To G. C.*

*Penketh, 7th mo. 23rd, 1816.*

"I have been much exercised in mind since I saw thee; and have been led deeply to consider the propriety of a very important step, that of offering myself as a member of the Society. In this subject I hope I have not been engaged from any lesser influence than a desire to conform to the Divine manifestations which have been opened in my mind in much clearness through abundant condescension. Before the desire above-mentioned came before me, I had been often inwardly engaged before the Lord, with strong desires that I might both know and perform His will in what concerned me.

"On returning home from Liverpool to re-open the school, I felt strengthened; and I believe it was about this time that I felt a total delivery from certain sceptical notions which had floated in my mind, not of my own, but the sentiments of wicked or misguided authors which I had chanced to see. One thing has long stood in my way to a nearer union with Friends, and had it not been graciously removed, might still have served as a stumbling block; this is nothing more than the



cross I found in the use of the numeral appellations of days and months. I now see, that to tamper in the performance of small duties, is a very dangerous thing. When about the age of fifteen, the beauty and propriety of the scripture *thou* and *thee*, were clearly opened to my understanding, and I was enabled to bear a consistent testimony to it. With regard to using the heathen names of days and months, I also felt a secret scruple; but not judging this sufficient to induce a mode of expression, from which I apprehended much ridicule, I gradually eased myself of the concern, till I began really to believe it a very unimportant matter. I had even collected many arguments to prove this, but alas! what are arguments when viewed in the irradiating light of God's Holy Spirit; when brought to the test of an unerring touch-stone of truth?

"In the course of this spring, some papers were sent to Penketh, being advice from Lancashire Quarterly Meeting, on days, &c., and D. H. sent me a copy;\* and a full conviction appeared to my understanding, that even this was a part of that holy testimony which we are called to bear; and the desire I felt to be found faithful in it, was accompanied with a thankful contented frame of mind. The effect was complete, all doubts being removed: and small as this might appear to some, I rejoice in having been helped one step nearer to a state of stability. About this time I had some very affecting recollections (chiefly in meetings) of the Lord's early dealings with me, and these seemed, together with present feelings,

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\*See Extracts from the Minutes and Advices of the Yearly Meeting, page 33. Reprinted for distribution by Lancashire Quarterly Meeting.

a confirming assurance that if ever I intended to take up my lot with any religious people, this was the people.

“W. T.”

Under the influence of these feelings, he resolved, with the concurrence of those of his friends whom he had informed of it, to apply for admission as a member of the society: the request was made, but from particular circumstances, was not communicated to the monthly meeting until some time afterwards; it was then granted, and he has alluded to it in some of his subsequent letters.

During most of the early part of the year 1816, he felt considerable bodily weakness; and in the summer, several symptoms appeared which induced a fear that he would fall a victim to consumption; he had a bad cough, and a pain in his side, with other attendants of that disease. He however continued to attend the school, for some time under great weakness and difficulty; but in the early part of the 8th month, increasing bodily indisposition compelled him to relinquish it. This was a severe trial to him, and he did it with great reluctance; but he earnestly sought for resignation, and in many of his letters, written about that time, he mentions the circumstance with much Christian meekness.

*To J. A.*

*Penketh, 9th mo. 1st, 1816.*

“How am I lost in a contemplation of what the Lord hath done for me, in awakening me for some time back to a greater concern for His truth! and now that sickness hath come, and my prospect of eternity grows nearer, I bless the

Lord, it also grows brighter. All my desire is after holiness, and a mind formed from the model of the blessed Jesus. Oh! for the meekness, the resignation, the love which characterized his living and dying moments! But I feel a fear, lest in disclosing thus much of my mind, I may speak improperly, and exalt the fleshly selfish part. For every spiritual benefit received, our language ought to be: 'Not unto us, O Lord, but unto thee, be the praise!'

"Notwithstanding the desire I have to possess the most precious of all treasures, yet I find many obstacles in the way, arising principally from the hardness and insensibility of my own heart. I sometimes feel myself a poor creature, but at such low seasons, I have frequently been favoured with a renewed manifestation of love, and a comfortable assurance, that the Lord would still extend his fatherly care over me. Some little have I known of the purging and fanning mentioned by John the Baptist; but much, very much, remains to be done. Oh, it is a great thing to be made meet for an inheritance with the saints in light! Great as such a preparation may seem, I anxiously long it may be the object of my desires, wishes, and endeavours; so that if it should please the Lord to restore me to health, I may have benefited by his chastisement; and if not, a blessed eternity opens to my view.

"I have many visiters, kind and obliging to the utmost; but how few speak to me in a manner that sympathizes with the state of my mind! How few speak of my beloved, or seem to have their minds resting under the shadow of his pavilion! I have been a little grieved at this; but the Lord hath shown me, that He alone is sufficient, and that I might be led to lean on an arm of

flesh. Two dear friends, from America called to see me; they spoke in much sweetness, and I may say, told me the secret of my heart. The language of my soul, as I now write, is that of praise. Oh, that we may both be finally conducted to that city, whose walls are salvation, and whose gates are praise!

“W. T.”

*To his Sister Mary Thompson,*

(Since deceased.)

“*Penketh, 9th mo. 1st, 1816.*”

“Anxiously expecting to hear how thou wert, we are much rejoiced to learn that thou art recovered. God has once more raised thee from a bed of sickness: to Him be all the glory, and may thy gratitude be shewn forth by striving to live in a nearer conformity to His blessed will.

“Every bodily affliction is a warning, and we may consider it as a voice speaking from Heaven, though too often forgotten and unheeded when health returns. Do not let this be thy case; but begin in good earnest to make thy salvation and election sure. Seek the Lord and he will be found of thee, and will shed abroad His love in thy heart. But observe, the Lord will be sought unto, and that diligently. He delighteth to manifest himself to the humble and the contrite, to those who maintain a holy fear constantly in their minds. But the idle and the careless who do not think his blessed favour worth seeking after, shall take their portion with the hypocrite. Endeavour to be watchful. Sin is not conquered without striving with all our might.

“Every evening devote a few minutes to an examination of the errors of the past day and to

making resolutions of amendment. If thou dost so, God will bless thee and will preserve thee in the influence of His dear love, which is more precious to me than life itself, and to which I commend thee.

“W. T.”

• To — —

“9th mo. 25th, 1816.

“The sweets of religion are only known to those who have been favoured with its enjoyment. It is beyond the power of words: no language, however replete with energy and expression, can tell the triumphs of virtue through the love of JESUS. O ye favoured few, who, toiling up the steep ascent that leadeth to celestial regions, hold on your course rejoicing! and when nature is at some seasons ready to faint, when the burden seems too heavy for the heat of the day, fix an eye of faith and prayer on your Saviour. He hath promised to ease the weary and heavy laden; and his word is truth.

“I have been much comforted and supported by that love which is stronger than death, and in this I feel content to submit to the Lord's will. Oh! there is nothing like a precious sense of the love and fear of God dwelling in the mind: to this I commend thee. Farewell.

“W. T.”

To. G. C.

“Penketh, 9th mo. 28, 1816.

“I am gratified by enquiries after my bodily health, but much more so by a feeling attention being evinced to the situation and support of my mind. Few, I am afraid, make this an object in

their visits to the sick ; yet I am sensible I need not really suffer from the lightness or forgetfulness of others, since my dependance ought to be placed higher than on man. Though not always watchful after my best interests, yet I have been much favoured with a peaceful, thankful state of mind. Nor is the prospect of an awful change to immortality gloomy ; on the contrary, it has been to me a source of consolation, and at times, of rejoicing. Thus far hath the Lord helped me, and marvellous is his name.

“ W. T.”

In many of his letters he has alluded to the Bible Society in terms of commendation. It was natural, that an institution of so benevolent a nature, should receive the decided approbation of his philanthropic mind, and in the next letter he has expressed his sentiments on the subject at some length.

*To J. K.*

“ *Penketh, 10th mo. 7th, 1816.*

“----- The Society has been tried as by fire, and has emerged from the ordeal like pure gold. All the arguments that ingenuity could devise, or sophistry recommend, have been employed to depreciate the worth of the institution, but opposed by the ægis of Christianity, the shafts of envy and malevolence have fallen harmless to the ground. If persecution is a uniform attendant on the professors of religion in its purest form, the friends of the Society may rejoice, since no new thing has befallen them. The same weak mode of reasoning which would now prevent the extension of truth, was formerly directed, against

the holy labours of Christ and his apostles. The Master himself was evilly entreated, no wonder there should still be found those who are averse to the declaration of his divine will. And here it strikes me, that the Bible seems peculiarly adapted to the purpose of universal instruction; no system of ethics, no synopsis of human knowledge, ever contained the same beautiful combination of sublimity and simplicity. Its doctrines are heavenly, its precepts pure; and while it offers consolation to the probationary sufferer here, it reveals to him a more perfect state of being, where sighing and sorrow shall cease forever.

"The imagery of the Bible is strong and nervous, and being selected from nature, becomes universally intelligible, and is, I imagine, strictly appropriate when transfused into the oriental tongues. These I conceive to be distinguishing excellencies in a book, which professes to point out to all men the way of salvation.

"The fervent friend of the Bible Society, will seldom bound his views or his wishes, by cold calculation on the success of the institution; he will reflect with astonishment and delight, how much has already been done, and relying on a continuance of the same heavenly impulse, he will anticipate with joy, the increased magnitude of its future operations: the continent of India in particular, presents a most interesting scene. Many specious objections have been urged against an attempt to christianize the natives; they will however, mostly be found to originate in ignorance or irreligion. Some allege the difficulty of qualifying missionaries with erudition sufficient to confute the subtleties of the Brahmins. In the first place it is certain, that the

accounts of their skill in logic, are much exaggerated; but were it much greater than it is represented to be, truth must ever triumph, where properly defended against their sophistries. Were men of talent as eager to qualify themselves in the oriental languages for this noble purpose, as they are seen to pursue worldly fame, we might hope for the greatest results. Every one is acquainted with the labours of a Ziengenbaltus and a Swartz. The success of their efforts is a proof how much, under Providence, an entire devotedness to the cause is able to accomplish.

“Nothing could contribute more to the success of the eastern mission, than a sense of religion prevalent amongst the British residents in India. The company have long been famous for wealth, power, and terrestrial acquisitions; it is high time they should be emulous for a reputation of another kind, that of assiduously labouring for the eternal welfare of their fellow-creatures. It is in their power to effect with ease, what solitary and unprotected individuals might labour at for centuries. May the great disposer of hearts incline this opulent body of men, to care for the spiritual welfare of those whom they govern; and to take a part in the great work, so happily begun, proportionate to their immense wealth and political influence!

“The purposes of Providence, though vast beyond human conception, have been mostly accomplished, by means apparently the most insignificant; and the displays of His grace seem analogous to the economy of nature, where the still, small fountain becomes, by constant accession, a mighty river. I allude in the first instance to the planting of Christianity, which must ever



be a lasting theme of wonder and admiration. Twelve poor men, of mean origin, are sent forth to overturn the altars of Greece and Rome, (an undertaking as vast as it was replete with success), and to combat the united opposition of the whole world: but they warred not with carnal weapons; accordingly, we see superstition, idolatry, and Grecian subtlety, rapidly give way before them. Their doctrines came home to men's bosoms, and were quickly adopted by the serious, as pointing out a more direct, simple, and luminous path to immortality, than had ever been revealed.

"The revival of pure religion at the reformation, had an obscure beginning, and seems at first, to have animated only a few individuals. The effects produced, seem unequal to the few instruments employed in the work, and from this, as well as other important changes which have happened in the Christian world, is exemplified the truth, that 'Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but God alone giveth the increase.'

"They who study human nature with benevolent views, will always dwell with the greatest delight on those favoured periods, when society has seemed to advance by rapid strides towards religious and intellectual improvement. May I not venture to mention the close of the eighteenth century, and a few of the succeeding years, as a time remarkably auspicious to the interests of mankind?—The abolition of the Slave Trade, the establishment of Sunday Schools, the new system of education, the existence of numerous benevolent institutions, and to crown all, the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society? May we not conclude, that the day star is arisen,

and that the Lord is preparing the nations of the earth for a great work, even the building up of Zion?

"There is, in the proceedings of the British and Foreign Bible Society, a wisdom, a vigour, a concentration of talents, energy, and Christian zeal, which bear the evident impress of divine approbation.

"With respect to the worthy Secretary who has written its history, there can be but one opinion; his zeal is temperate yet firm, his labours are indefatigable, and his eloquence serves at once as an ornament and a bulwark to the society. In the history of the Society's origin, he has evinced a most laudable impartiality, and is at once minute and comprehensive in his details.

"What a concurrence of instruments has there been, eminently qualified and suited for the work! labourers differing in complexion, but agreeing in the grand point, an advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom.

"I see a peculiar propriety in the resolution adopted, to circulate the Scriptures without note or comment, and to this resolution the Society has most scrupulously adhered, in opposition to applications which have been preferred. The minute account given of the regular organization of the Society by the author of its history, is replete with interest. The description of his feelings on his attendance at the first meeting, is truly affecting; it is the picture of an ingenuous mind labouring under the effects of prejudice, alternately ready to advance or recede from the question, till at length, the full force of truth bursts upon his astonished view in all its beauty. Like the great apostle of the Gentiles, being once

informed of the Lord's will, he loses no time in its fulfilment. See him go forth, the temperate, yet warm and eloquent advocate of the best of causes : his life, labours, and talents, all dedicated at the foot of the cross. I do not speak with any disparagement of the merits of his worthy colleagues; they have honourably filled up their respective departments, and to the worthy President in particular, much praise is due for his pious vigilance, and unceasing attention to the Society's interests. The stimulus is now given to thousands ; the goodly fabric begins to display the beauty of its towers and the symmetry of its proportions ; the sound of the everlasting gospel is gone forth to the ends of the earth.

"-----I can scarcely conclude this letter, without adverting to the awfully distressed state of the country, and the increased financial burdens under which England labours. Much virulence is displayed by all parties, and sharp invectives are substituted in the room of calm ratiocination. Many of these wrong tempers however, are called forth by the exigencies of the times, which are extremely trying to the middle and lower classes. Whilst the political horizon is thus overcast with clouds, dark and lowering, how cheering, how animating is the prospect of the spread of pure religion, and the consequent defeat of bigotry, ignorance, and superstition ! The traveller, from viewing the ravages of the desert's whirlwind, turns to some verdant spot, rendered doubly delightful, from the contrast of surrounding desolation : thus the Christian stands unmoved by the shocks of political conflicts ; one object is to him paramount to every other, the increase of vital godliness ; and provided this

goes on, he can make himself easy on all minor topics.

“With respect to the question of the superior claims of a contemporary society, we may hope, ere this, that the controversy is fairly laid asleep: the objections have been answered in an able, luminous, and perspicuous manner: but, in my opinion, the intention of the British and Foreign Bible Society in distributing the Holy Scriptures, is so pure, the object so exactly defined, and the act so truly consonant with the doctrine and spirit of the early reformers, that no sort of apology seems requisite. ‘Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days,’ is one of the injunctions of this blessed book; and can I possibly err, if I place a Bible in a family, where none existed before? nay, I believe the seed that is thus sown, will be nourished by the dews of heaven; the bread cast upon the waters, will be found eventually to be the bread of eternal life, and after many days, shall light up the way to immortality.

“W. T.”

*To T. T.*

“*Penketh, 10th mo. 8th. 1816.*

“----- Placed as I am, in a situation, in which, but for the exercise of Christian benevolence I must ere this have perished, I find it a duty to discard every thing which savours of pride, and to receive with thankfulness whatever the hand of kindness bestows. My situation has indeed, at times, appeared trying; yet I have been much favoured with support both inward and outward, and have been enabled to confess that it was good for me to be afflicted.

"It is a small matter to possess an historical knowledge of truth, and to wear the cloak of profession in common with others; but to make a solemn dedication of all the mind's powers; to be wholly devoted to the advancement and prosperity of truth, requires for its support, a heart filled with humility, and the united aid of faith, prayer, and the most diligent watchfulness. A few there are who walk thus, having their conversations in heaven, and with these my humble desire is to sojourn whilst on earth, in the unity of the spirit and the bond of peace.

"W. T."

*To M. G.*

*"Penketh, 10th mo. 12th, 1816.*

"I feel desirous of informing thee that in a most trying situation, both inward and outward, I have been most mercifully helped—hitherto the Lord hath helped us, blessed be His Holy name!

"I have been careless, and I have even doubted, but I hope unbelief will have no more place in my heart, for I feel the fullest evidence of the blessed truth of religion: it is no name, no sound, no theory of opinions, no new-fangled system adapted to weak minds. But it is what no words can describe—a gem of inestimable worth, the pearl of great price; it conquers the passions in health, and comforts the soul in affliction; it enables us to leave the world without regret, and to anticipate with humble confidence the joys of futurity; in short, it is a heaven upon earth, and 'the power of God unto salvation.' Can I be thankful enough that I am enabled to bear this testimony? But I feel much

how necessary it is to watch, and on this I believe our well-being chiefly depends.

“W. T.”

*To J. H. W.*

“----- Minds which have simply one object in view, viz. an advancement in knowledge and virtue, soon approximate towards each other, and from the slightest interviews, the most lasting unions have been formed. Something of this I experienced in the profound respect and sincere affection which thy short stay at Penketh inspired.

“But whilst I contemplated those superior talents which the gift of Providence, and thy own industry have furnished thee with, I felt a tender solicitude, that they might be preserved pure and untainted, fit for the service of the Great Head of the Church. Excuse me for making such early mention of my anxiety on this head; it is what I often wish for myself, and particularly for those, who, to the advantages of a good education, add the possession of superior natural endowments.

“My health has suffered much since I saw thee; I have been confined from school more than ten weeks, and I fear there is as yet very little prospect of a speedy amendment. Though it has been a deep trial, yet I think it has afforded me improvement in the best of things. I have been induced to greater watchfulness, and to a more diligent examination of my own heart; and though a peaceful confidence has been often, through mercy, granted me, yet I have daily to mourn over my slowness, coldness, and negligence.

“W. T.”

To T. T.

*“Penketh, 10th mo. 29th, 1816.*

“I have been reading Wm. Edmundson’s Journal and have found it sufficiently interesting. He was a Friend of the right ancient sort, to whom dungeons, stocks, and corporeal punishment were quite familiar. He underwent many bodily sufferings and dangers for truth’s sake, and appears to have possessed uncommon boldness in whatever cause he thought to be right.

“----- The hardships which so many thousands of our countrymen are at this time suffering is a matter of serious consideration; if no effectual remedy is found during the following winter, I am afraid it will be a time of great trial and distress. With these prospects before me, my mind is much impressed with the necessity there is for people rather to confide in an ever watchful Providence, than to look so much outwardly for deliverance. Many abuses in government certainly want a reform, nor is the representation of the nation in parliament at all equal. But can we attribute our present situation to either of these defects, or to the sinecures about which so much has been said? It is to me more plainly owing to the deplorable war just concluded; a war in which a great part of the nation has eagerly joined, and can it be wondered if they should reap the fruit of their own doings? A spirit of peace and christian love prevailing in the hearts of mankind, would strike at the root of the matter and effectually restore public harmony. Without this blessed regulating principle, there may be meetings, and speeches, and pamphlets written innumerable, whilst there is

not one jot of advance made towards public reformation. The same Divine Spirit that operates on the minds of individuals must also reform nations: there is no other way for a guilty polluted nation like this to return, but by the way of repentance and humiliation. Whatever may be the result of the present disturbed state of things, it will be best, I believe, for all Friends to keep themselves clear from that spirit which leads to wranglings and contentions; that so, in the day of trouble, their hands may be clean, and they may look with confidence to an Almighty protector.

"I feel much interested for the success of the Society newly formed 'for the promotion of permanent and universal peace.' There are divers opinions respecting it, but I cannot help feeling sanguine; if rightly conducted, under the blessing of Providence, it can hardly fail of inculcating purer sentiments on many minds.

"I have no doubt but thou wouldst feel gratified that my request was so kindly granted by the monthly meeting; I had reason to feel truly thankful, not that I am sensible of any thing of my own, worth bringing to the Society, but for the benefits which I hope to derive from so excellent a discipline, and for a prospect of a nearer and dearer communion with faithful and exercised friends.

"W. T."

To G. C.

"Penketh, 11th mo 1st, 1816.

"I believe that the diversity of gifts, mentioned in 1st Corinthians, would be more fully displayed in many individuals, were they to en-



deavour after that preparation of heart which the Lord requires.

"I have no doubt but the cordial reception which the monthly meeting was pleased to give to my request, would afford thee satisfaction. J. B. and W. F. had a solid opportunity at my house the day but one before the meeting; and two days after it, I. and S. H. called to inform me of the result. This was by no means the least interesting part of the concern; our minds, I believe, were drawn together in great love; and much good advice and many sound cautions, were imparted. My anxiety now ought to be, that I may walk worthy of my high calling, and by a life of purity and love, bring no stain on truth and its professors. May I be enabled to follow Christ in the way of regeneration, and to take up my cross in good earnest, forgetting the things that are behind, and pressing forward to the mark of the prize of our high calling, in Christ Jesus!

"W. T."

*To M. G.*

*"Penketh.*

"I do feel thankful that the Lord, has enabled me to view my indisposition in the same light which thou hast seen it, as intended for my good; if it does not make for my temporal, I humbly trust it will for my eternal interests.

"Happiness and misery, as regards circumstances in life, are little more than empty and unmeaning words; that situation is replete with the most happiness, in which we serve God with the greatest assiduity: while, on the contrary, if we neglect to make Him the supreme object of

our affections, however fortune may smile upon us, there can be no solid comfort enjoyed. It is true the trials of life are various, and differ greatly in their weight and extent; some have to wade in far deeper water than others, but I believe that to all such there is a proportionate degree of strength dispensed by the Giver of all grace. If the cup is bitter, it shall be sweetened with the balm of consolation. May I be enabled to exemplify the truth of these positions, by an entire acquiescence in whatever subsequent afflictions I may be visited with.

“I have experienced the advantages that result from laying the burden on the mighty, but to do so requires the mind to be deeply and truly humbled with a sense of its own imperfections, and at the same time fully impressed with the might of its Deliverer. Our spiritual enemies are so active and numerous, as often to prevent us from enjoying these desirable feelings. For my own part I find that the deviations to evil are exceedingly natural and easy. When we go on thinking ourselves safe, we imperceptibly glide into the mazes of error and all the horror of guilt. The solicitations to evil are many; they assail us on every side, in the closet as well as in the market; nay, when we would approach the throne of grace, our offering is too often polluted—with the fervour of devotion there is infused a tincture of pride.

“Let us then, my dear friend, call in the aid of that Power, which can alone enable us to conquer so many formidable enemies. It was once a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night, to the children of Israel; and shall the spiritual Israel be less favoured? Oh, that we could believe,

without ever doubting, that all things shall work together for good to them that love God!

“W. T.”

*To R. O.*

*11th mo. 12th, 1816.*

“I often feel comforted that I have at length become united, (I trust both in name and spirit,) to that people, who practise the doctrine of the cross: yet I am sensible that there are defections existing; and for the few individuals of ——— meeting, I have been under some exercise of late; but I am also favoured with a right view of whence our strength cometh, and that though all men should forsake the Lord, yet His truth, and the excellency of it, would remain the same.

“W. T.”

*To G. C.*

*“Penketh, 11th mo. 23d, 1816.”*

“I have much time for serious reflection, and hope I may improve so valuable an opportunity of increasing in heavenly wisdom. I have had clearer views of late of the causes of deviation and slackness in some, so much so, that I have detected a spirit of censoriousness at work in my mind, which, if hearkened to, would lead from love and true charity. Humility begins with correcting errors at home, and exhibits as much tenderness towards offenders as is consistent with truth. Notwithstanding, there is a state of irreligion prevalent with some minds, which cannot but excite sorrow at times, in the hearts of those who have taken up their cross,

and are following their Divine Master in the path of regeneration.

“W. T.”

To R. O.

“Penketh, 12th mo. 13th, 1816.

“It is an excellent precept, though sometimes difficult to practise, ‘not to care for the morrow;’ and it is observable, that there is no distinction made in the command: the poor, as well as the affluent, the afflicted in body or mind, all are equally charged, ‘not to care for the morrow.’ Though this injunction of our Saviour may apply to ourselves, yet it occurs to me, that such a state of resignation would much alleviate the despair and anxiety of the millions of our fellow-creatures, who are bowed under the yoke of poverty. My heart is often affected with a sense of the extent of misery really existing.

“I have received a few pamphlets on the subject of war; I feel more than ever convinced of the unlawfulness of this *fleau du genre humain*. It is dressed up in dazzling colours, sanctioned by the imposing words, Honour, Glory, Valour, and Patriotism; but strip it of this glare and examine it by the pure principles of Christianity, it will then appear to be a hideous monster, a disgrace to human nature, and the source of incalculable misery.

“I still find it best, dear friend, to keep from reading strange books, as my mind is thereby at leisure to feel after that pure love which is sweeter than expression can tell. My mind is often affected with a desire that Friends of this meeting might become more spiritually-minded. How much do we lose, if we refuse to live-up to.

the privileges of our great and high calling! Our own loss is very great; but shall we not also be answerable for the poor, lean example which we hold forth to others? 'My son give me thy heart,' saith the Lord, and I believe this means a gift of the whole heart, without the most secret reservation. This appears difficult to such as have acquired vicious habits, or to those whose good seed is choked by the riches of this world, and the cares thereof.

"Farewell, dear friend, I hope we shall escape many pollutions, and at last be found blameless, through the mercy of our common Saviour.

"W. T."

This letter was nearly, if not quite, the last that he addressed to any of his correspondents; his weakness was so much increased, that in this, and several which precede it, he was obliged to have the help of another person, to write what he dictated.

The symptoms of consumption already mentioned, continued to increase, and at the approach of winter became still more distressing, so as to leave the termination scarcely any longer doubtful.

He had throughout the benefit of the professional advice of the medical friend who has been mentioned before; and though the progress of the disease could not be arrested, yet every measure was adopted that might tend to its mitigation.

The writer of this sketch saw him, for the last time, a few weeks after he had given up the school: he was then much enfeebled in body, but in an excellent frame of mind, manifesting great patience and resignation. He expressed

his gratitude to the Almighty for His past favours, and said: 'I do not feel anxious about outward support, seeing that I am inwardly so helped and strengthened.'

He was preserved in this resigned and serene state of mind through the whole of the deep trial, and submitted without repining, to every thing allotted him to bear. This disposition is thus described by one who attended upon him in his illness with affectionate care: "Never shall I forget the inexpressible sweetness of his mind, when in the deepest affliction; there was such a resignedness and peace about him, it was a comfort to be near him; always satisfied, never murmuring: it was a peace which was to be felt—the peace of God. He was a pattern of patience. For more than a year before he died, I had noticed a particular solemnity, and humility of mind about him. Many times, when got down stairs with much difficulty, he would burst into tears, and say: 'It is worth suffering anything to enjoy the peace of mind which I feel!'"

During the early part of his confinement, he conversed much with those who called to see him, and continued to read a good deal: but subsequently, he endeavoured after stillness, and inward retirement, in which he found an increase of spiritual strength; and desisted from reading nearly all books but the Holy Scriptures, regarding most others as 'strange things;' his communications, too, became less frequent, often consisting of short texts of Scripture indicative of great thankfulness and peace. To a friend who visited him, he spoke of the great love manifested by the Redeemer to the poor of this world, and said: 'I have been lost in love and wonder, as I have been considering

this morning, that such great and high reward is reserved for them, to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of Heaven.'

Frequently when his pain remitted a little, he seemed to be absorbed in divine contemplation, and waiting upon God. These seasons were many times attended with tears: upon his sister's observing that he fretted himself, he answered: 'Oh no! it is to me unspeakable joy.'

As his malady increased, and his body became more enfeebled, the powers of his mind seemed to acquire strength, and to shine brighter and brighter as he approached the termination of life. A few days before his death, he calmly looked up to a friend who was with him, and said: 'I have had three such days! Oh, such days of unutterable blessedness, as I have never before conceived possible in this state of existence!' Thus was he like one who has his lamp burning, waiting for the coming of the bridegroom.

Towards the end of the first month 1817, he was confined to his bed, and his breathing became increasingly difficult. His faculties, however, remained unimpaired, and he frequently spoke of the comfortable state of mind with which he had been blessed during this long and afflicting trial, and of the great thankfulness which he felt, that best help had been afforded throughout. On the morning of the 9th of the 2nd month, he seemed to have a presentiment that his dissolution was very near, and said to his sister: 'A trying time is coming: pray for me: thou must endeavour to pray for me.' About an hour after this, he peacefully departed; being a few days more than twenty-three years of age.

It is presumed that the character and sentiments of this extraordinary young man, have already been pretty fully developed: yet it may not be improper to conclude this account of him by a few further remarks.

He was of a truly innocent and amiable disposition, mild and gentle in his manners, and ever unassuming. He always evinced a propriety of behaviour, which had for its basis, the real source of all true politeness, a constant endeavour to do unto others, as he would that others should do unto him.

He was frank and candid in his speech; his conversational powers were very great; and he expressed his sentiments with much fluency, generally having some pertinent remark to offer on most topics of discourse; this he did with great sweetness of manner, and always showed much deference to the opinions of those with whom he conversed. In select society where he felt greater freedom, his conversation assumed a more serious cast, and sometimes turned upon the state of his own religious feelings; then, like a scribe well instructed in the affairs of the kingdom, he brought forth from his treasury, things new and old.

He possessed a retentive memory: his mind was of that vigorous cast, which generally accomplishes whatever it undertakes; and he seemed almost intuitively to arrive at conclusions, which in most men, would have required considerable reflection. This enabled him to form just opinions on many subjects, and in degree compensated for his want of experience, giving him something of the wisdom of age, whilst possessing the energy of youth.

His attainments in various branches of knowledge, and his great love of reading have been



already noticed; but, whilst he held in high estimation the pleasure arising from literary pursuits, and partook largely of that pleasure, it was still his constant care to keep that enjoyment, and those pursuits in their proper places, ever making them subservient to the higher and more important claims of religion; thus affording a proof that a well-regulated literary taste is not incompatible with the profession and practice of true Christianity.

It is a conspicuous feature in his character, that, although exposed for a considerable time in the frail and impetuous season of youth, to the almost constant influence of vice—of moral turpitude—of low and impure conversation—yet he appears to have contracted no taint—to have escaped unhurt—to have passed through the trial uncontaminated. Christian patience, humility, and faith, he always possessed; and these virtues were particularly exemplified on two occasions: once, when although obliged to relinquish his school, his only means of subsistence, he was able to say that he felt no anxiety respecting outward support; his trust was in Him who has promised never to leave nor forsake His humble dependent children. The fulfilment of this he was favoured to witness, even in the outward sense, by having his every want supplied. In early life also, when he endured with meekness and humble fortitude, the scoffs and scorn of those into whose company he was brought by his employment.

Should these pages fall into the hands of any who were fellow-labourers with him at that time, let them view his walk through life; let them consider his piety and virtue; and they will be constrained to acknowledge that *his* was the true

wisdom; that he preferred, and sought, and found, that knowledge which maketh wise unto salvation. And above all, let them contemplate and derive instruction from his peaceful close; when, as he approached the confines of that 'city which hath foundations,' his heart was filled with hope, and his tongue employed in praise; even the beginning of a song, of which the melody is unlimited and the duration eternal: 'The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.'

THE END.



